

DUNGEON CRAWL CLASSICS

The 998th Conclave of Wizards

#88: A LEVEL 6 ADVENTURE
BY JOBE BITTMAN



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The 998th Conclave of Wizards

A LEVEL 6 ADVENTURE

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INTRODUCTION

Remember the good old days, when adventures were underground, NPCs were there to be killed, and the finale of every dungeon was the dragon on the 20th level? Those days are back. Dungeon Crawl Classics adventures don't waste your time with long-winded speeches, weird campaign settings, or NPCs who aren't meant to be killed. Each adventure is 100% good, solid dungeon crawl, with the monsters you know, the traps you remember, and the secret doors you know are there somewhere.

In *The 998th Wizards' Conclave*, the band of adventurers is invited to join a mysterious sect of magic-users on the condition that they complete a series of challenges. These tribulations are best faced by a group of 6 or more hale and hardy adventurers. At least one party member should be a spellcaster of some stripe (wizard, elf, or cleric).

BACKGROUND

The Star Cabal is an assemblage of the most powerful spellcasters in the Known Cosmos. Though the identities of the current members are shrouded in secrecy, the roster of alumni include Hpesoj, Lokerimon, Ekim, and Nythuul – archmages of legendary repute. The group originally came together to repel invaders from beyond. At that time, a protective ensorcellment was placed at the center of the universe called the Grand Ward; its protective magic holds elder gods and interdimensional predators at bay. Over the centuries, the cabal has become a mere shadow of its former glory. Their ranks have dwindled in number and they squabble over petty matters.

The hour of the 998th Wizards' Conclave is nearly at hand. When next the dwarf galaxies align in syzygy, the convergence of intergalactic magic fields will create another super ley line used by the Star Cabal to power the Conclave's ritu-

SUMMARY OF KEY PLOT ELEMENTS

The 998th Wizards' Conclave starts on a remote island on Aereth and expands to the edge of the Known Cosmos and beyond to other dimensions. While there are many locations to explore and jumping-off points for judges to extemporize, it is important to remember there is an underlying plot thread that ties together the disparate adventure locations. The key points follow.

- Weeks to months before the adventure, the PCs receive a puzzling invitation to join the Star Cabal.
- The first challenge is located inside an extinct volcano on the Isle of Tlahuaco. The PCs must infiltrate a giant crystal shard protected by a titanic guardian to complete the challenge.
- The crystal shard becomes a rocket that transports the PCs to the traveling space city of Ciz, currently floating in orbit around the planet Romulac.
- The PCs are given accommodations and free reign of Ciz. The PCs may choose to explore the city on their own or be guided by Bresson to the Star Cabal's council chambers. Smart players will take their time learning about the strange customs of Ciz.
- The floating city has many customs that may seem strange. The Law of Ciz is enforced by red robots known as Briggers and is in effect in all areas of the city except within buildings owned by the Star Cabal. Cabal members are seen as benevolent protectors yet they do not rule.
- The magician Reynard has vanished. He was in possession of a highly desired artifact called the *Baton of Continual Light*. Wherever Reynard is, his fate is most likely tied to the missing item. Read the sidebar: Schrödinger's Plot Device, page ##, to better understand Reynard's role.
- The PCs must declare their intention to join the Star Cabal openly in court at the Grand Palace, whereupon they shall receive the terms of the second challenge. Should the PCs not make an appearance at the Grand Palace in a timely manner or refuse the second challenge, the PCs will be sent back to Aereth, ending the adventure.
- The second challenge culminates in a spell duel against one of the presiding magicians, but the PCs must first gain the endorsements of at least 2 cabal members. The spell duel takes place in the ceremonial battle chamber of the Grand Palace. The PCs have 8 days to complete this challenge.
- As the adventurers progress through the adventure, remember each magician has his, her, or its own goals as detailed in "Introducing the Magicians," page ##. Each may aid or interfere with initiates as suits them.
- Trips to planetoids within Romulac's inner planetary ring might be required during the second and third challenges.
- The victor of the spell duel is given the third challenge: to perform a quest in service to the Star Cabal. The initiate must retrieve the missing *Baton of Continual Light*, or perform another task of equal difficulty of the judge's choosing. There is no time limit on this portion of the initiation.

CHALLENGE ONE



The first challenge from the Star Cabal is to locate and enter one of their hidden towers. The magicians' tower is notoriously difficult to locate as it is positioned at the intersection of multiple ley lines and protected by a powerful guardian. The adventurers seek a tower that rests within the heart of a supposedly extinct volcano, Mount Icpitl, on the faraway Isle of Tlahuaco.

THE ISLE OF TLAHUACO

Tlahuaco languishes in the Sea of Desperation beneath a blanket of impenetrable jungle and malarial marshlands. A volcanic mountain looms above the dense jungle, its lofty heights shrouded by clouds. The air is thick with humidity and thicker with dread. Many decades ago, the indigenous people of this region, the Xulmec, abandoned the foreboding island for reasons unknown. The crumbling ruins of their civilization litter the island, knotted with vines and overgrown by lush vegetation. In recent years, colonial villages from the Kingdom of Crieste have cropped up on the island's perimeter: Feronte, Pleniére, Gerranotte, Lieux-Claren, and—the largest among them—the port town of Voltigeur.

To reach the Isle of Tlahuaco, the adventurers must travel by sea. Passage can be secured aboard one of the merchant ships that make trips to Voltigeur or by hiring a sailing ship and crew. Once they arrive, the characters may purchase lodging and food at any of the villages, and all standard weapons, armor, and equipment at Voltigeur. At least one hireling is available in each settlement (2 sp/day) willing to serve as a guide.

Soon after the adventurers land, a brief earthquake shakes the entire island. The local inhabitants have never known this to happen before. As the party approaches Mount Icpitl, the quakes become more frequent. Flocks of birds and jungle beasts flee from the volcano's direction as a thin wisp of smoke rises at the apex of the menacing black mountain. Tangles of vines conceal caves near the base, which lead to the volcanic crater. The first challenge of the Star Cabal lies within.

THE GUARDIAN

A giant milky crystal shard the size of a castle tower is driven into the ground near the center of the crater. The shard tower has a door near ground level that is opened using the seven-pointed medallion, but gaining access is difficult at best. The cabal has bound a mighty guardian to the shard with eldritch runes: a prime tentacled horror.

The prime tentacled horror hails from the planet Zargon, a fetid ball of stinking marshland and black swamps four thousand light years from Aereth. The massive beast is terrifying to behold. This specimen would be worshipped and feared as a god-king on its home world. It has an elongated humanoid torso as thick as the trunk of a baobab tree, but as flexible as an asp. Slimy ooze exudes from every pore of its greyish-green, rubbery skin. Lofting 30' in the air, a boulder-sized head is visaged by a maw crowded with brown teeth

the size of short swords, a single jaundiced central eye, and a glowing horn that curves from its brow. The horn possesses potent restorative magic that regenerates the beast's health—even after being reduced to zero hit points—though 30 points of direct damage to the horn destroys it. Octopoidal clusters of 15' long tentacles take the place of hands and feet, each tentacle tipped by a raptor talon capable of flaying or disemboweling an unarmored foe. The tentacled horror can also unleash an unearthly roar that causes blind panic in all but the most stalwart of veterans.

The guardian is compelled to kill all who approach the shard tower. It positions itself between the characters and the tower's entrance. It is not necessary to kill the guardian to complete the challenge; accessing the shard tower is sufficient. Once the portal is closed, the guardian is too large to pursue characters inside. See "The Shard Tower" below for more information about the entrance.

When the characters reach the inside of Mount Icpitl, read the following text:

The massive expanse of the volcanic crater fills your vision. The landscape is like nothing you've seen before. Silt the color of rust covers the entire basin buttressing formations of porous black rock. Cirrus clouds paint broad strokes of tyrian and amber on the vibrant blue sky.

At the center of the crater, a giant crystal shard over 100' in height juts from broken, steaming earth as if it had been thrown from the heavens like a javelin in the hands of an angered god. A human-sized circular opening is positioned at ground level. Sun glints off a facet of the milky white shard.

Allow the characters to form a plan of action to approach the tower. The prime tentacled horror shows itself when the party gets within 100'. If the characters employed a stealthy strategy, give them a surprise round to react. The tentacled horror takes whatever action necessary to repel intruders even if it means its own death. The ground rumbles every other round during combat.

When the characters reach the shard tower, read the following text:

The earth once again buckles and shakes beneath your feet just before you hear a primeval roar. A titan green creature almost half as tall as the crystal slithers around to the front and clings to the surface above the ground-level opening, suspended by suckered foot tentacles. The beast releases another blood-curdling howl while shaking tentacle arms, a glowing, curved horn sprouting from the forehead of its hideous one-eyed face.

Prime Tentacled Horror (30' tall, 12,000 lbs.): Init +5; Atk tentacle +24 melee (4d10+10 plus constriction) or bite +10 (2d16+6); AC 21; HD 18d12; hp 122; MV 60' or climb 30'; Act 4d24; SP see invisible, immune to *sleep*, *paralysis*, and mind-affecting spells, fearsome roar (creatures 4 HD or less must make DC 20 Will or flee 1d4 rounds), constriction +1d10 damage, regeneration (heals 1d12 end of each round), crit on 20-24; SV Fort +11, Ref +15, Will +14; AL N.

ISLE OF TIAHUACO



□ = 5 MILES

Eztenquul Jungle

Mount Iepitl

The Serpent's Horn

The Sea of Desperation

To The Kingdom of Cirieste

Path
Feronite

THE VOLCANO

Pleniere

PAVED ROAD

Voltigeur

Lieux-Claren

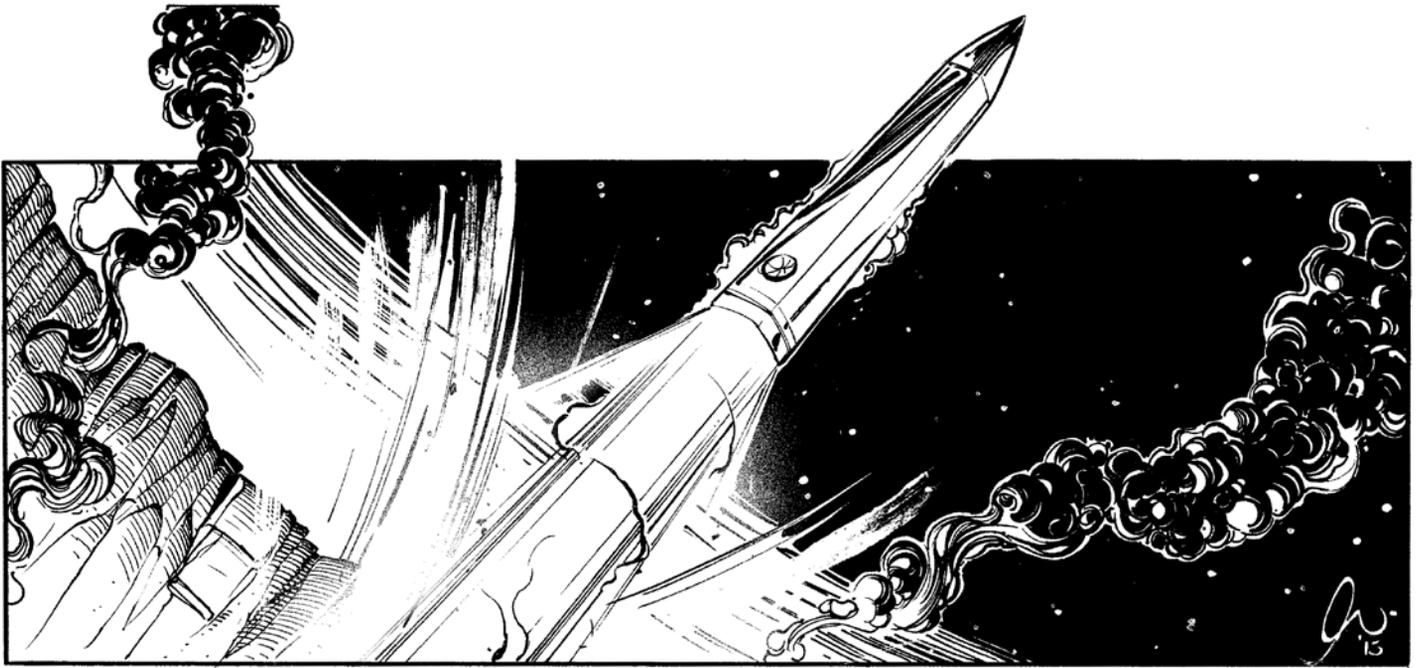
Xayactl Bay

MARSH LAND

Gerranotte

The Sea of Desperation





THE SHARD TOWER

The giant crystal shard is a magic vessel capable of interstellar travel. It has one round, exterior opening constructed from polished brass located at ground level. The opening is bisected into 7 curved pieces with a depression of a seven-pointed star at the center. Placing the Star Cabal medallion into the depression causes the entrance to iris open. A lever on the inside is pulled to close the door. Once sealed, the guardian is unable to breach the door. The room behind the portal is barren. A single ladder at the far end leads to a large central chamber 15' above.

When a character climbs the ladder, read or paraphrase the following text:

At the top of the ladder, you discover a large central chamber roughly 20' in diameter. While the crystal shard was opaque from the outside, from this room you can see in all directions as if the crystal were fashioned from clear glass. Chairs with straps and buckles are situated against the outer walls. A copper pedestal is located in the center of the room. A sudden tremor almost rips the ladder from your grip. The tentacled beast appears to your left, beating against the transparent crystal wall. You feel the tremor of its blows, but hear nothing within the protective confines of the shard.

The copper pedestal has a single red button on top. Pressing it causes the shard tower to launch into the heavens (which happens to coincide with a volcanic eruption) to its preprogrammed destination: the peregrine city palace of Ciz.

As soon as the red button is pressed, read or paraphrase the following text:

A high-pitched whine reverberates through the chamber. Every crystal surface begins to vibrate in unison, emitting a sympathetic note. The entire structure heaves as geysers of rocks and steam begin launching from glowing red fissures in the earth. The crystalline chorus rises in pitch, rattling your teeth. The tentacled beast's one eye widens in terror as it scrambles up the crystal, but it's too late. A black and red gout of molten rock swats it to the ground, harmlessly bouncing off the crystal. The voices of the crystals assemble into a new chord that threatens to split your eardrums.

The world explodes as the chamber is bathed in brilliant vermilion light. You are pinned to the ground by invisible hands. The crimson light suddenly turns cerulean. The fiery Mount Icpitl shrinks below you as you rocket into the air—higher still, the isle shrinks into the Sea of Desperation, and the continents could fit in your hands. The bright day fades to night and you are surrounded by millions of stars. Your world is a shrinking ball of blue and green. The stars turn from points to streaks of light as you lose consciousness.

EXPANDING THE ADVENTURE

Long-time fans of the Dungeon Crawl Classics line of adventures may recognize Mount Icpitl as the location of DCC #16: *Curse of the Emerald Cobra*. Though written to be compatible with another game system, *Curse of the Emerald Cobra* is not difficult to run as written with the Dungeon Crawl Classics RPG system. The stat blocks can be converted on the fly with ease, and the adventure is of equivalent level. Judges can opt to run *Curse of the Emerald Cobra* as a lead-up to "Challenge One" of the Star Cabal. Use the stat block for the prime tentacled horror from the "Challenge One" encounter in place of the monster in area 4-6. Placing the cabal's medallion into an inset at the center of the seven-pointed star causes the earth to shudder and break open as the top of the crystal tower rises from the ground, then the volcanic eruption begins.

CHALLENGE TWO



It is the duty of every member of the Star Cabal to participate in and respond to challenges of wizardly combat. In the second of the cabal's challenges, the initiate must defeat one of the reigning magicians in a spell duel. The Star Cabal informs the adventurers of the second challenge once they attend a council session in the Grand Palace (area 8) and declare their intention to join the magicians' group.

THE SPACEPORT

The city of Ciz travels across the cosmos at the dictates of the Star Cabal. The upper section contains the city palace sealed within a protective magic bubble. The lower section, formed from a honeycombed asteroid, provides the foundation for the city palace's architecture. A large hollow cavern is used as a spaceport and stables. Aliens and wizards moor various strange vehicles in this area. The shard tower pilots itself into the spaceport and comes to rest at a docking platform.

The characters regain consciousness aboard the shard tower as it nears Ciz, in orbit around planet Romulac. Read the following text:

The piercing notes of a bosun's whistle rouse you from a deep slumber. How long have you been asleep? Your vessel now swims in a sea of stars unfamiliar. The shard hurtles toward a misty violet planet circled by green and grey rings. As you draw closer, the details of the ring come into focus; asteroids, dust, and motes of earth encrusted with vegetation trudge along a sluggish orbit.

The shard's trajectory arcs, then it dives at a bright blue spot in the cosmic rubble. Can it be? Yes! Some manner of city in the stars beneath a translucent, azure dome. The shard zooms past the dome and slows as it approaches the underside. The domed city is built upon a massive pockmarked rock. Your vessel passes through a shimmering barrier and into a gigantic cave filled with scaffolding and strange lights. Dirigibles, shimmering discs, and winged beasts float in the cavern, lashed to a latticework of platforms. The shard hovers above a dais upon which a robed figure stands. A clear panel hisses open and lowers to create a ramp to the dais. "Greetings, <A PC CASTER'S NAME> of Aereth. We have been expecting you."

Bresson, a wizard's apprentice, acts as manservant and guide during the characters' visit to Ciz. His job is to greet the adventurers and answer their questions. If the PCs wish to join the Star Cabal, they must attend a council meeting at the Grand Palace (area 8) and state their intention. Bresson will either lead the adventurers to their temporary living quarters in the Guest Tower (area 3) if they wish to rest or explore Ciz first or directly lead them to the Grand Palace for an audience with the magicians if they are the impatient sort. Bresson truthfully answers questions posed to the best of his ability, and warns the characters before they make missteps such as breaking a law or incurring the ire of a magician. Bresson has a lawful nature. Therefore, he refuses bribes and reports any malfeasances he sees back to

Fantax, the cabal's leader.

Bresson: Init -1; Atk staff +1 melee (1d4); AC 11; HD 1d8; hp 5; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP harmful spell 3/day (1d6+3 damage within 50', DC 13 Will save for half); SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +3; AL L.

THE CITY PALACE OF CIZ

Ciz is a city of ancient enigma. The founding members of the magicians' cabal discovered the abandoned palace complex built upon an asteroid drifting in the cosmic supervoid between the galaxies of Ird and Deremenestes. A protective wall encircled a mostly empty plaza of ornate buildings. The cabal steered Ciz through space, using it as a mobile base of operations in their epic battle against the awakening elder gods.

Following the First Conclave and the establishment of the Grand Ward, the magicians constructed a spaceport and their own towers along the outer walls. The peripatetic city attracted thousands of starfaring races as it hurtled through the cosmos, who in turn built their own camps during their tenures. Over the centuries, the camps grew into buildings and haphazardly filled all the available space within the outer wall.

CITY TRAVEL

Ciz lacks any semblance of avenues or boulevards. Navigating the labyrinthine city streets is accomplished mainly by moving toward the magicians' towers and other landmarks visible over rooftops. The Star Cabal finally instituted a height rule for alien structures and instituted the Right Brigade to keep the peace. Even today, Ciz is in a state of constant flux. A building might be constructed that blocks a previously accessible thoroughfare overnight. Height codes could force the destruction of another structure creating a sudden new artery for foot traffic. Shops crop up, flourish, and shut down within a week. The streets are congested around the clock by creatures as varied as the salmagundi of architectural styles around them. Characters will soon realize it is very difficult to return to any locations visited in the city, apart from the larger structures.

ALIEN LIFE

The peregrine city draws a steady stream of star merchants, itinerant wizards, and thrill-seekers from across the cosmos. Throngs of extraterrestrials choke the narrow streets night and day. Spaceport docking fees and exemplary damages continue to flow into the city's coffers so the Star Cabal tolerates the chaos. The adventurers see many strange new life forms at every turn. Alien appearances can be generated on Table A-1: Alien Life Forms. Roll 1d6 twice to determine body type and traits. Then roll 1d8 for a sub-trait. Table A-2: Alien Names is used to generate the names of newly-discovered alien races.

Table A-1: Alien Life Forms

1d6	Body Type	Traits and Sub-traits
1	ooze	Pallid complexion, and (1) large pupilless black eyes; (2) its head is encased within a glass sphere; (3) elongated body; (4) wears a purple sash; (5) barbed tail; (6) empathic; (7) fleshy lobes hang from head; (8) hands with long fingers.
2	ephemeral	Green-skinned, and (1) bulbous head; (2) covered in scales; (3) has antennae; (4) leaves a slime trail; (5) luminescent; (6) multifaceted eyes; (7) garbed in shiny cloth; (8) stinks so bad your eyes water.
3	insectoid	Coated in shaggy fur, and (1) eyestalks; (2) smells like stale beer; (3) speaks in roars; (4) 10' tall; (5) flies with bat wings; (6) drools; (7) pig-nosed; (8) hates humans.
4	ophidian	Clammy flesh, and (1) wears an eye patch; (2) gets drunk on sour milk; (3) a surly manner; (4) its legs are longer than torso; (5) has a prehensile trunk for a nose; (6) an octopus head; (7) screams for no reason; (8) fish-like appearance.
5	humanoid	Taut orange skin, and (1) spindly body and limbs; (2) long neck topped by a hammerhead; (3) giant saucer-like eyes; (4) eats cats; (5) aggressive; (6) multi-armed; (7) saber-toothed; (8) featureless face.
6	automaton	Blue, and (1) short in stature; (2) made of metal; (3) has a reptilian tail; (4) has two heads; (5) inexplicably attractive; (6) covered in armored plates; (7) coated in hoary frost; (8) has horns.

Table A-2: Alien Names

1d10	Prefix	Stem	Suffix
1	Ab-	—	'cha
2	Ba-	-bak-	-afex
3	Chi-	-derp-	-azion
4	Ka'	-happ-	-eal
5	Li-	-fil-	-erite
6	Oo-	-jor-	-ion
7	Pre-	-min-	-ite
8	Qua-	-rex-	-oran
9	Vul-	-zizil-	-uva
10	Zil-	—	-yxian

Table P: Pidgin to Common Translation Table

Celestial	Common
tavern, inn	brothel
saloon	tavern, inn
market	the weekly cube auction (see "The Law of Ciz")
bazaar	market, store, or shop
temple, church, shrine	Mausoleum of Accumulated Experience
armoror or armory	Tower of the Right Brigade

COMMUNICATION

Communication is problematic in Ciz. The proceedings of the Star Cabal are conducted in Common. In the rest of the city, a pidgin form of Celestial (also called Angelic) is spoken as it is one of the few languages that is constant throughout the universe. Parties without a speaker of Celestial can communicate with aliens by bringing a guide as an interpreter, using the *comprehend languages* spell (each individual alien tongue counts as a "terrestrial" language), or pantomiming while repeating a word in an increasingly louder voice.

Further complicating matters, some words spoken in Ciz's Celestial pidgin have taken on different meanings. Asking directions from passersby using the wrong words may result in frustration and wasted time until the characters acclimate to the local parlance.



THE LAW OF CIZ

Ciz has completely equitable rules of law, therefore has no need for trials. There are no distinctions between illegal acts such as misdemeanors or felonies. All crimes are called infractions and have the same punishment: cubism. In the cubing procedure, the criminal is placed into a hyperbaric tube, disincorporated at the subatomic level, and frozen into a condensed cube of solid matter. The prison cubes are catalogued and stored in the Tower of the Right Brigade (area 5). Cubes may be acquired at weekly judicial auction. The constant influx of new of alien cultures inevitably causes friction. The Right Brigade, the protector-automatons of Ciz, police the streets. Most city-goers call them "The Briggers". Briggers are easy to spot in Ciz's crowded streets. They are armored in crimson metal with sleek angular lines, topped by a ridged helm with a glowing red eye slit. Telescoping arms tipped with pincers hang from their broad shoulders. Briggers do not have legs and move by levitating 3' above the ground.

Fighting, thievery, or any other general disturbances to the public peace are all infractions which will draw a patrol of Briggers in 2d4 rounds. The Briggers rush into combat blar-

ing klaxons and strobing red and blue lights from their eye slits. When Briggers enter initiative, creatures lower than them and who have made an attack in previous rounds are identified as enemies of Ciz and targeted for arrest. Those higher in initiative are ordered to immediately disperse, but will be targeted for arrest if they do not comply. This decision is final and may not be appealed.

There is one exception to this rule, called “denizen’s arrest.” If someone is assaulted or robbed, the victim—and the victim only—is entitled to grapple the attacker until the Briggers arrive. If a witness corroborates the victim’s story, the attacker is arrested and the victim freed regardless of initiative order. Bystanders are never permitted to intercede in a crime in progress, even to prevent murder or stop a fleeing thief. Bystanders may only watch the proceedings from a safe distance and provide testimony to the Briggers.

Briggers only mete out subdual damage. Prisoners are brought to the brig in the Tower of the Right Brigade for summary judgment. Infractions are only recorded when a Brigger makes a report at the Tower of the Right Brigade. Patrol sizes cumulatively increase in size by one for each patrol that goes missing until the perpetrators are apprehended.

Briggers: Init -2; Atk pinch +8 melee (2d6); AC 15; HD 6d10; hp 40; MV fly 30'; Act 2d20; SP mancatcher (+8 grapple checks, can grapple 2 targets simultaneously); SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; AL L.

Due to the strict laws of Ciz, the reported crime rate is very low, but the Briggers cannot be everywhere at once. Most crime happens very quickly (1-2 melee rounds). Both assailant and victim usually flee the scene for fear of falling on the wrong side of the Briggers’ instant adjudication.

Ciz’s busy inhabitants do not have time to explain the intricacies of the legal system to every new arrival. Until the characters understand the city’s unusual code of conduct, they may blunder through several encounters or end up catalogued in the Tower of the Right Brigade. Bresson or another guide (if one accompanies the group) will warn the characters before they incur an infraction. A guide won’t think to detail the law unless they characters ask pointed questions. Guides can be hired at most saloons for 1 gp per hour, but speak common very poorly and often mistranslate. If the entire party ends up locked in prison cubes, an agent of the Star Cabal will buy their cubes and send a bill to the adventurers.

The laws of Ciz do not apply to crimes committed beyond the walls of the city palace. Likewise, lawbreakers are not pursued outside of Ciz.

FACTIONS

Factions in Ciz are as fleeting, fractious, and contradictory as the travel routes. The major groups are the Star Cabal, the Right Brigade, the Mercantiles, and the Spectres. The adventurers start with a neutral relationship to each group.

The Star Cabal holds the most power within Ciz. The cabal plots the city’s course through the stars, controls the original palace buildings, and collects spaceport taxes and a portion of punitive payments to ensure Ciz’s future operation. However, they do not hold political power over any of the city’s inhabitants. The cabal presents a harmonious visage. Behind closed doors, the magicians argue and bicker endlessly. Secret alliances driven by avarice and lust for power threaten to tear the group apart from within.

While it is true the Star Cabal founders established the Tower of the Right Brigade and bound its police force into service, the cabal no longer has direct control over the Right Brigade. The Right Brigade applies their simple logic to the blind machinations of justice. The Law of Ciz always has been and that is the way it is. There is little pressure to change the legal system because judicial auction is nothing more than a minor annoyance to the city’s established wealth. For whatever reason, the Law of Ciz works.

The Mercantiles are a collective of the city’s most powerful merchants and traders. Ciz’s haphazard structure is largely due to the Mercantiles’ influence. Outside moneyed interests find it impossible to gain a foothold in the city’s lucrative trade due to the complex system of payoffs and the logistics of delivering merchandise to a city bereft of accessible roads or even street signs. Almost all products for sale in the city pass through warehouses of a handful of Mercantile power players.

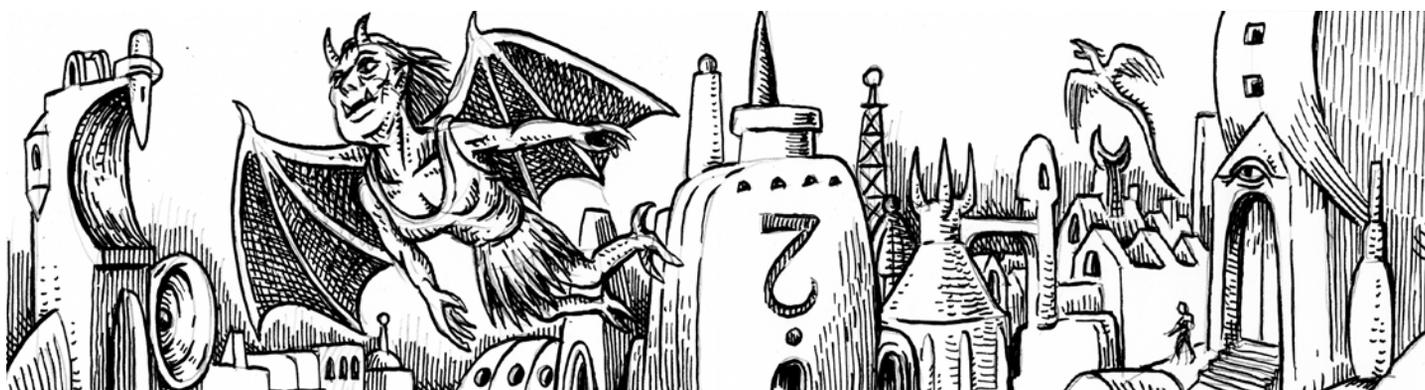
In recent months, a shadowy group calling itself “The Spectres” has infiltrated Ciz. The group has made brazen attacks on Brigger patrols throughout the city. The Spectres’ call to action is plastered all over Ciz. They demand the violent overthrow of the Right Brigade. No one knows exactly who the Spectres are, and for good reason: they do not exist. Though probably an invention of the Mercantiles, street thugs and other miscreants now take on the mantle as scapegoats for their nefarious activities.



Table C: City Street Encounters

1d24	Encounter Details
1	<p>A gang of rival initiates also aspires to join the Conclave's ranks. Reaction (roll 1d4): (1) introduce themselves; (2) mock or threaten; (3) ambush; (4) cause trouble for characters (e.g., charm spellcaster character into attacking a passerby, and then yell for the Briggers).</p> <p>Rival Wizard: Init +0; Atk longsword +2 melee (1d8), crossbow +0 missile fire (1d6), or spell; AC 13; HD 5d6; hp 18; MV 20'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP familiar, spellcasting (+7 spell check); SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +3, AL N.</p> <p>Spells known: (Level 1) <i>cantrip</i>, <i>charm person</i> (plague of slorops soften blows by 1d4 damage), <i>knock</i> (+4 to future spell checks), <i>find familiar</i>; (Level 2) <i>mirror image</i>, <i>spider web</i>; (Level 3) <i>breathe life</i> (psychic shield, +4 to AC and Will saves next round).</p> <p>Familiar: Mithril owl. Atk +6 melee (1d6); AC 16; hp 4; SP crit die 1d12, crit table III; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +1; AL N.</p> <p>Acolytes (3): Init -1; Atk mace +1 melee (1d4), dart +1 missile fire (1d4), or spell (special); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 5; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP <i>charm</i> 1/day, harmful spell 2/day (1d6+3 damage within 50', DC 13 Will save for half); SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +3; AL N.</p>
2	<i>You feel like you are being watched.</i>
3	Random character makes a Luck check. Success: <i>You feel something move in your pocket.</i> Failure: Character loses a randomly determined small item. The perpetrators are (roll 1d6): (1) street urchins; (2) invisible assailant; (3) alien cutpurse in top hat; (4) floating hand; (5) alien pick pocket; (6) hook and fishing line, item is racing down the street.
4	<p>If any magicians are hostile to the characters, cutthroats ambush the party. Half of the group is positioned on the surrounding rooftops. The rest are disguised at street level. The alien cutthroats attack with surprise. Should the adventurers be defeated, they will be bound, gagged, and delivered to the hostile magician's tower.</p> <p>Cutthroats (1d4+1): Init +3; Atk blackjack +5 melee (1d3/2d6) or blowgun +6 missile fire (1d3/1d5 plus poison); AC 14; HD 3d6; hp 11; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP poison (DC 13 Fort save or sleep for 1d4 rounds), thief skills +4 (backstab, disguise self, sneak silently, climb sheer surfaces, hide in shadows); SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +2; AL C.</p>
5	A new shop is discovered. Roll 1d10 and make up a name: (1) saloon (food, lodging, guides); (2) flea market (various); (3) noodle cart (food); (4) weaponsmith (weapons and ammo); (5) general store (equipment); (6) street vendor with wares on a blanket (various); (7) armorer (armor); (8) curio shop (mostly antiques, but 25% chance of a scroll or potion); (9) ferrier and stables (mounts and related gear); (10) fruit stand (food).
6	A flyer is posted here. Roll 1d8: (1) lost pet, 75 gp reward; (2) Articles of the Spectres, a seditious pamphlet that rails against the Briggers; (3) pasquinade of a random magician; (4) help wanted; (5) public notice, new construction; (6) missing child, 500 gp reward; (7) "Post no bills"; (8) Notice of Judicial Auction, weekly at the Tower of the Right Brigade.
7	<i>You feel an overpowering sense of déjà vu.</i> The adventurers just walked in a circle. Roll again.
8	<i>A beggar rattles a coin jar at you.</i> Roll 1d6: (1) hungry waif; (2) blind and tapping a cane; (3) stumbling drunk; (4) has a pet on a rope leash; (5) screaming lunatic; (6) sobs uncontrollably.
9	Pedestrians clear out of the way for a magician's litter to pass. The magician is conveyed in a boat-shaped carriage walking on six giant duck feet. Friendly magicians stop to chat with the party (25% chance for neutral magicians). Roll 1d8: (1) Fantax; (2) Pembroke; (3) Zaffir; (4) Rhauche; (5) Mygah; (6) Quentin; (7) Guise; (8) Io.
10	The party finds something of interest in the street. Roll 1d8: (1) lost pet; (2) prison cube; (3) random equipment; (4) lost child; (5) busted circuit board; (6) 1d3 gp; (7) an alien corpse; (8) random weapon.
11	Angry mob is demonstrating in the street carrying hand-painted signs. Roll 1d5: (1) "Down with the Briggers"; (2) "No more insectocanids"; (3) "Death to the Cabal"; (4) "No new taxes"; (5) "God hates Flergs".
12	A furtive magician's agent suggests a clandestine after hours meeting at his patron's tower. Roll 1d8: (1) Fantax; (2) Pembroke; (3) Zaffir; (4) Rhauche; (5) Mygah; (6) Quentin; (7) Guise; (8) Io.
13	<i>You smell a foul odor. Water spills into a sewer grate here.</i> It is said there is a vast subterranean city beneath Ciz populated by degenerates and criminals. Briggers will not enter the sewers.
14	An alien approaches with a proposition. Roll 1d6: (1) business opportunity; (2) marriage proposal; (3) leave Ciz now or else; (4) wishes to purchase an item the character has; (5) hands out flyer for local business; (6) offers guide services (2 gp/day).

15	Screams for help come from a nearby alley. Roll 1d6: (1) mugging; (2) consensual alien conjugation; (3) Briggers apprehending a criminal; (4) duel; (5) wailing creatures emerging from an egg sac; (6) "noise bard" engaged in performance art.
16	A street vendor offers wares at 20% over standard prices. Roll 1d4 for type: (1) alien artifacts; (2) weapons and ammunition; (3) equipment; (4) armor.
17	A new building is being constructed right in the middle of the road. The party must retrace their steps (roll again) or argue with the angry construction crew to cross (25% chance to bring the Briggers).
18	An assassin is concealed in a darkened window two stories above the street with a poison arrow nocked in his bow. He has been hired by hostile interests to cripple a random spellcaster in the party. The sharpshooter hides in the shadows, fires one arrow at his target's back, then flees. The sharpshooter swallows a cyanide pill if captured. Sharpshooter: Init +4; Atk poisoned dagger +8 melee (1d4 plus poison) or shortbow with poison-tipped arrows +13 missile fire (1d6 plus poison); AC 14; HD 3d6; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d16; SP poison (DC 20 Fort save or 1d6 Intelligence (permanent), 1d3 Intelligence (temporary) on successful save), thief skills +5 (backstab, disguise, sneak silently, hide in shadows); SV Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +4; AL C.
19	A messenger delivers an anonymous letter. The note inside reads (roll 1d6): (1) Trust no one; (2) Pure intention is the currency of heroes; (3) All is not what it seems; (4) Meet me at the stables at midnight if you want to live; (5) The vile influence of the demonlands has befouled the Grand Palace; (6) Reynard lives.
20	A shopkeeper shouts, "Stop thief!" Pedestrians rush to get out of the way of a burly four-armed creature barreling down the avenue in leather armor and a black mask. None of the bystanders offer aid. Getting involved in this situation is sure to incur an infraction with the Briggers.
21	Bright red legless suits of armor float down the street toward you. The helms that top their shoulders turn slowly from side to side, surveying the wild assemblage of life forms. The Briggers are looking for fugitives. Player characters will be targeted for arrest if they evaded capture previously and any of the Briggers was able to reach the Tower of the Right Brigade to report the infractions. Briggers (4): Init -2; Atk pinch +8 melee (2d6); AC 15; HD 6d10; hp 40; MV fly 30'; Act 2d20; SP mancatcher (+8 grapple checks, can grapple 2 targets at a time); SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +4; AL L.
22	Graffiti is scrawled on the wall. Roll 1d7: (1) "No tomorrow"; (2) a strange symbol that looks like an upside down number 2; (3) pink narwhal; (4) demon skull; (5) "Buck the Friggers"; (6) initials in vibrant colors; (7) mural covered in tags.
23	A barker calls out to you, "Cubes here! Get your cubes here!" His table is filled with transparent cubes with scribbled labels. This trader deals in prison cubes. The cubes are marked at 30 gp, but the price is negotiable. He insists the prisoners are all good people caught up in poor circumstances who will make good hirelings. Cubes can be reconstituted at the Tower of the Right Brigade (area 5) for a small fee.
24	If the party travels alone, a scaly ascetic in a cloth robe poses a mysterious question. Roll 1d6: (1) What is truth?; (2) Why are numbers?; (3) Who defines evil?; (4) What good is limitless power?; (5) Where is reality?; (6) Who controls your destiny? After listening to the answer, the ascetic departs in silence.



KEY LOCATIONS IN CIZ



Within Ciz's walls, several buildings and monuments stand as anchors in the ever-changing sea of alien architecture. The average citizen on the street is able to point in the cardinal direction of any of these locations.

Area 1 – Spaceport & Stables: The spaceport is located in a large hollow in the asteroid under the city. Several large holes in the undercarriage allow access for the multitudinous stellar vehicles: brightly-colored sampans with iridescent sails, massive mirrored disks blinking with mysterious lights, silver rockets adorned with filigreed finials, and bizarre winged beasts roosting on giant perches. Scaffolding and platforms line the walls connected by ladders and ramps. The walkways eventually connect to a tunnel in the ceiling which holds a massive stairway that leads to the city's surface. The stairs open next to a distinctive landmark: a clock tower.

A stabler tends a herd of strange mounts capable of space flight. The creatures are called dwimmers, and one is large enough to transport the entire party. They have four scaly legs and a crest of antlers running down their thickly furred back. Dwimmers fly on varicolored wings similar to those of a butterfly. A rider can steer by yanking on the pair of antennae that stretch from its small head. Dwimmers are docile and have no attacks. The stabler rents out the mounts for 80 gp per day. Members of the Star Cabal stable their own dwimmers here, which can be requisitioned with an official pass.

Dwimmer: Init +1; Atk none; AC 20; HD 12d10; MV 20' or fly 50'; Act 1d20; SP infravision, space flight; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +6; AL N.

Area 2 – Clock Tower: A pyramidal structure thrusts above the glass-domed hovels and multistoried shacks. At the apex, a giant timepiece (shaped much like a pocket watch) slowly spins in midair. The time is marked along the edges by twenty-three celestial runes. The clock face has five hands, of which one creeps counterclockwise.

The clock tower with its illuminated face can be seen from almost anywhere in Ciz day or night. The clock tower serves two purposes. It displays the time in the universal time (the 23-hour days of planet Algol), georelative solar system time, and antihyperbolic planar time. The clock tower also marks the location of the stairs that lead down to the spaceport (area 1).

Area 3 – Guest Tower: A modest tower pokes above the ramshackle buildings here. The tower is wider and smaller than the other towers on the horizon.

This tower serves as temporary quarters for guests of the Star Cabal. The tower is at half capacity now. The adventuring party can lodge here for free during their visit and leave items in their room without fear of theft. The quarters for spellcasters are luxurious suites, large enough to accommodate the entire party. The attendant, Bresson, assumes non-spellcasters are hired help and asks magic-users if they would like to have them sent to the servant's quarters.

Area 4 – The Bazaar: An assemblage of striped canvas tents are assembled in the center of this open plaza. Vendors stand behind tables shouting about the virtues of their wares in a babble of unfamiliar languages. The scent of grilling meat drifts through the air.

Ciz is also known as the "City of Marvels" and for good reason. Extraterrestrials from far-flung galaxies flock to the city to engage in trade. It is said that highly advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic. Nowhere can this better be seen than in bazaars of Ciz. While the Right Brigade confiscates advanced weaponry, the wares of thousands of civilizations are on display. The Mercantiles rule the bazaar and they have eyes everywhere. Adventurers who steal from the bazaar might find themselves as targets of the Spectres.

The tents are too low to see over the surrounding city buildings, but the local populace knows the bazaar is located north of the Grand Palace. Characters can purchase standard equipment, weapons, and armor at the bazaar as well as exotic food and drink from distant planets. One of the biggest draws for visitors is the alien technology. A character that digs through the vendor's bins has a 5% chance of finding a useful piece of alien technology per hour. See sidebar: Alien Technology for examples.

Though rare and expensive, magic items can also be found for sale in the bazaars of Ciz. Generate random items using Chapter 8: Magic Items in the DCC RPG core rulebook. Magic items found on Ciz and in the surrounding areas should have an alien or technological theme. A magic long sword becomes a laser sword that telepathically speaks in Freezian and has a bane of crebbits, the giant demonic fox-goats that ravage planet Tardulus. A technologic scroll might be a spinning cylinder with a viewing slit. Peering within, the spell's words are animated in the syllabic cuneiform of a long-dead alien race. Table M: Magic Item Cost can be used to determine an approximate bazaar price.

Table M: Magic Item Cost	
Item Property	Price
Staff (base price)	300 gp
Magic weapon (base price)	100 gp
Scroll (base price)	500 gp
Rod, wand (base price)	700 gp
Attack bonus	Bonus modifier squared × 100 gp
Each spell	Spell level squared × 100 gp
Each bane or sword power, type I	100 gp
Each sword power, type II	300 gp
Each sword power, type III	500 gp

Area 5 – Tower of the Right Brigade: *A constant stream of animated suits of red armor float in and out of a tower located here, sometimes frogmarching an indignant alien. The tower is constructed from large granite blocks. Round bubble-like windows line the entire tower. Guards in crimson armor survey the area from all directions from the tower's parapet.*

This tower serves as the base of operations for the Right Brigade, Ciz's ubiquitous police force of red-armored automatons. Known colloquially as Briggers, Ciz's ancient guardians operate completely independent of the Mercantiles and Star Cabal. Lawbreakers are brought here for summary judgment which involves being transformed into a compact prison cube and being stored in the tower in a process called cubing. See "The Law of Ciz" section for more information.

Every week, a judicial auction is held in front of the Tower of the Right Brigade and prison cubes can be purchased. The starting bid is calculated by multiplying the number of infractions at time of incarceration by 100 gp. The auction price includes the cost of the decubing procedure. Found or purchased prison cubes can also be brought to the tower at any time and decubed for a modest fee (10 gp). In general, the auction is a mere formality and cubes may be purchased at the starting price. However, bidding wars have been known to erupt over prison cubes tied to crimes of passion as families and other interested parties vie for the chance to mete out their own justice beyond the reach of Ciz's laws.

Area 6 – The Athenaeum: *An austere building clad in white marble polished to a brilliant sheen juts proudly above the ramshackle city block. Wide steps lead up to an arched doorway. Alabaster sculptures of muscular four-legged beasts with snarling fangs sit atop pedestals on each side.*

The Athenaeum houses the most extensive collection of arcane research in the universe. Among the stacks, one can find books on any subject including spells, the history and rosters of the Star Cabal, taxonomies of demons and other beasts, the city of Ciz, star maps, and the answers to any questions the characters may have about the adventure background.

No one is permitted access to the library without the express permission of the Star Cabal. The guardian statues move their heads and glare menacingly at all who traverse the stairs, ready to attack if need be.

A character who decides to join the Star Cabal will be given supervised access to the Athenaeum. Transcriptions of all the spells from the DCC RPG core rulebook are available for perusal. The library's preceptors are willing to help an initiate learn a new spell in preparation for a spell duel, greatly reducing the time it would normally take to learn. A spellcaster must give up knowledge of one spell and devote three days to the study. Then, the student makes a check: 1d20 + caster level + Intelligence modifier against DC 10 + spell level. If the check is successful, the new spell is learned. If the check fails, the attempt to learn the spell cannot be made again until a level of experience has been gained. However, desperate times sometimes call for desperate measures. Even upon failure, the spellcaster can choose to learn the spell, but he or she must roll the mercurial effects for the spell with a d10 + Luck modifier instead of percentile dice.

Area 7 – The Mausoleum of Accumulated Experience: *A somber air hangs over a stone building with a high rounded roof. The light of the suns glints off stained crystal panes set high in the wall.*

Though this structure has a pious atmosphere, the mausoleum is not associated with any religion. In Ciz, there are no places of worship—only shrines of knowledge. The crypts here contain the brains of deceased magicians of the cabal, preserved in jars of their own spinal fluid. By placing a drop of spinal fluid on the tongue, a character may commune with the dead magician for a short time and ask 1d3 questions that must be answered truthfully. The archivist stresses that only 1 drop of spinal fluid is allowed per week per cabal initiate. The magician's brain must be specifically requested by name. "This isn't a tavern," as the archivist likes to remind visitors.

In addition to being able to answer questions, some brains also confer additional properties. See Table B: Brain Juice Effects.

DECUBING

Decubing an unknown individual's cube carries with it an unspoken social contract. The decubed person is indentured to their benefactor for up to one week. This person will serve in the same capacity as a hireling. Of course, decubing a stranger comes with inherent risks. The Law of Ciz bars Briggers from disclosing a prisoner's crime. The hireling may be a psychotic killer or an unfortunate bystander. Upon decubing an unknown cube, roll on Table A-1: Alien Life Forms to get the creature's appearance. Then, roll 2d6 to determine the creature's personality: (2) serial killer, attempts to murder a party member in their sleep; (3) arsonist, starts more than one fire; (4) kleptomaniac, steals from characters and NPCs; (5) angry, picks fights with NPCs; (6-8) fluent in Common; (9) bumbler, fires into melee and makes terrible decisions; (10) small child, runs away at first opportunity; (11) geriatric, -2 to all stats; (12) Nividian prince, pays 300 gp to be released from service.

Hireling: Init +2; Atk scimitar +2 melee (1d8+1) or javelin +3 missile fire (1d6); AC 12; HD 1d8; hp 5; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +0; AL Random.

Table B: Brain Juice Effects

Name	Effect
Ekim	+1 spell check to <i>Ekim's mystical mask</i> (permanent) and nicotine poisoning for 1d4 Stamina loss (temporary, 1d4 days)
Emirikol	+2 spell check to <i>Emirikol's entropic maelstrom</i> (permanent)
Drawmij	+2 Intelligence (temporary, 1d6 days)
Lokerimon	+1 spell check to <i>Lokerimon's unerring hunter</i> (permanent)
Hepsoj	+1 spell check to <i>Hepsoj's fecund fungi</i> (permanent)
Nythuul	+1 spell check to <i>Nythuul's porcupine coat</i> (permanent) and +1 AC (temporary, 1d3 days)
Reynard	Not present.
Zuuman	Sealed Rataxxus in a quasilace; can reveal the demon's name and explain how to release the ward

Area 8 – The Grand Palace: A commanding structure stands authoritatively at Ciz's midmost point. Tiered stairs in front of the building lead to a row of grand double doors. Bas-reliefs on the frieze depict haloed mages wielding wand and staff. The spires and gables reach commanding heights that can be seen from anywhere within the city walls.

The Grand Palace is the cabal's seat of power. Within its opulent halls, the magicians oversee the daily operations of the spaceport, adjust the flying city's course, and grant audience to petitioning wizards. Access to the upper floors is restricted to cabal members. Each magician has a private office in this area in addition to a tower of residence in Ciz. The upper floors also hold a sanctum where the magicians freely deliberate on matters before them, Ciz's arcane steering controls, scrying mechanisms, and the arena where the magicians settle their disputes.

The public is allowed open access to the bottom two floors of the Grand Palace. The public offices of the spaceport have a large staff of clerks to administer the collection and distribution of spaceport taxes on the second floor. This staff also manages the daily operations of the buildings in Ciz under the cabal's purview: the various wizard towers, the athenaeum, the mausoleum, and the palace. The autonomy of the cabal-controlled buildings is sacrosanct. The Briggers are not permitted to enter any of the cabal's structures. Security is provided by a private force of cabal

ALIEN TECHNOLOGY

Alien technology is mysterious and strange. Many of the items for sale in the bazaar are space junk, the castoffs and bric-a-brac of advanced civilizations. Most of these items are worthless to the adventurers: dead batteries, spools of magnetic tape, soundwave screwdrivers, and broken toys. However, some items have wondrous properties though no immediate practical use. Players will inevitably come up with novel ways to employ these devices. Multiple copies of devices can be found by those who spend time digging through the endless bins in the flea markets. Many times, traders do not know a device's purpose or use, but they all demand insanely high prices for these items, usually upwards of 1,000 gp each.

A few items and their potential uses are detailed below. It is up to the judge to create more:

Bronze ring: This simple ring is made of polished bronze, the thickness of a finger, and large enough to wear over the wrist like a bangle. When a command word is spoken, the bronze ring becomes fixed in space in its current position. No amount of force moves the ring. The metal ring could be used as a grappling hook by tying a rope to it, tossing it into the air, and commanding it to stop at height. The ring could be used to stop a fall. A strong character with two rings could use them like monkey bars to cross over a ravine.

Light ball: A plum-sized sphere dances in the air, giving off soft light. This device was created to delight children on a distant planet. Shake the ball and tap it against an object or creature, and it will follow its target wherever it goes. The ball can be used as a torch, or attached to missile weapon ammo to make it easier to locate after being fired. The balls come in many different colors.

Black plate: This black disc is cool to the touch, and roughly the thickness and diameter of a dinner plate. The black plate repels any objects placed directly below it. If placed on the ground, it floats roughly 6 inches in the air and can support 300 pounds. Several plates could be attached to the bottom of a platform to create a floating wagon.

Glass rod: A thin, transparent rod 3 feet in length, it has been rematrixed with a graduated antimatter polarization pattern. If the rod is thrown, it travels 10' then makes an abrupt 90-degree turn and continues its path. The direction of the turn depends on orientation of the rod. An arrowhead, fletching, and a nock could be attached to the rod to make an arrow that can be fired around corners.

guards, although the guards often hand off criminals to the Briggers, providing witness of their deeds, as the Star Cabal does not maintain its own jail.

Cabal guard: Init +2; Atk polearm +4 melee (1d10); AC 16; HD 3d8; hp 14; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; AL L.

A large rotunda takes up most of the first floor of the Grand Palace. Rows of stadium seating are arranged around a raised platform holding a crescent-shaped mahogany desk. Nine high-backed chairs are evenly arranged around the desk, a nameplate positioned in front of each setting.

This is the cabal's audience chamber. Petitioners from across the cosmos come here to entreat the magicians' judgment in matters of great import. The litany of concerns is wide and varied. When magic-users with power that extends beyond their planet or galaxy have a disagreement, it is here they come to have their differences settled. Knowledge-seekers come here for advice on alchemical and arcane enigmas. Others request access to rare documents in the athenaeum or beseech the cabal to allow communion with a magician catalogued in the mausoleum.

The rotunda is most active in the month preceding the Wizards' Conclave (which happens to be now). As the greatest among magic-users know, the Wizards' Conclave occurs every twelve to sixteen months when multiple intergalactic ley lines converge at a single point in space for a very brief time, creating an incredibly powerful super ley line. Tapping into this power source allows spells and ritualized magic to have their effects amplified a thousand-fold: spell ranges can sometimes extend to the very edge of the universe; fireballs can be created as large as suns; and the very fabric of the cosmos unraveled and woven.

The allure of unbridled power has a seductive pull. The members of the cabal must work in concert because no single mage can ever be trusted with this power alone. The cabalists vigilantly scrutinize each other for signs of power lust and external influence. For this reason, diabolism is strictly forbidden due to its corrupting influence. Consorting with demons is tantamount to treason, and is grounds for dismissal and capital punishment in egregious cases.

The convergence of super ley lines is difficult to locate. It never occurs in the same place twice, can be created anywhere in the universe, and only lasts a few scant minutes. The Star Cabal uses a sophisticated scrying device, a huge hollow brass sphere spinning with cogs and gears, that can determine the general vicinity of the convergence, but the exact location cannot be pinpointed with any certitude until minutes prior.



MEET THE MAGICIANS



nce they have gained their bearings, the adventurers will probably be eager to meet their strange hosts. The cabalists mostly ignore the party until they attend a court session. The guide, Bresson, urges the party to attend a council session at their earliest convenience. He sits through the proceedings answering any questions the characters may have.

Let the Audience Begin: When characters are ready to audience with the magicians, read the following:

An usher leads you through an arched door into a concert hall overflowing with intergalactic petitioners. Rows of stadium seating radiate from a scalloped center stage with a long semicircular council desk. The chamber burbles with a hundred alien tongues. As you take your seat, three musicians in motley outfits blast a fanfare on their tinny clarions. A diminutive figure in coattails strikes a gong and the crowd falls silent. "Order! Order! Please rise. The honorable magicians approach."

The small announcer clears his throat and then speaks with practiced, dramatic inflection.

"Rhauche of Daboo." A portly, toadish fop wearing a baldaquin blouse and fur-lined cloak waddles onto the stage using a magnificent staff as a walking stick. He adjusts a tall snail-shaped hat with fat sausage-like fingers knotted by glittering rings – at least three on each finger. The slimy creature limps to stand behind a seat at the far left of the stage.

"Zaffir of Zilbo." A spindly creature with smooth grey skin and overlarge black eyes saunters toward a seat on the far right of the stage. The seats are being filled from the outside edges inward. Zaffir is garbed in a padded jerkin with pointy spaulders and a yellow bycocket with a long feather in the brim. The mage clasps a silver fife in his hands while standing at attention

"Mygah of Manfrisco." After a long pause, a pallid, purplish humanoid with two rows of sunken eyes on a gaunt face enters the scene. The lugubrious magician expressionlessly strokes a white cat with three cloudy green eyes. He somberly stands behind his seat, clad in a flowing orange robe decorated with embroidered beadwork and black tassels.

"Io the Metal Magician." A metallic figure – resembling a skeleton constructed in entirety from lengths of polished pipe – clomps onto the stage, each movement accompanied by high-pitched whines. The odd creature is covered in a patchwork of plates and flashing lights. The contraption stands over 7' tall with a narrow beanpole frame. A lavender cape spangled with silvery stars is draped over its shoulders. The ill-fitting garment stops midriff.

"Quentin the Basselite." A one-eyed creature sashays into view garbed in full bishop sleeves, a velveteen vest, pantaloons, and spiral-pointed boots. A fabulous sateen turban with a brilliant ruby stickpin rests on his head. The magician grins wide, then offers an exaggerated flourish of greeting to the assembly before proceeding to his station.

"Witch Queen Guise Galferai." A slender young woman with



umber skin and white pupilless eyes struts into view, halting briefly to survey the crowd. Her low-cut bodice is ruffled and hemmed in by silvered sammite. A scarlet sash is slung over one shoulder, pinned in place by an ornamental scarab brooch. With one hand, she pushes back a lock of white hair that has slipped from beneath her heart-shaped hennin. A brass wand with a flying eagle figurehead is gripped in the other.

“Reynard of Altraboria.” The introduction hangs in the air for a full minute. Petitioners in the stands nervously glance around the chamber. The announcer scribbles something in a ledger with a feathered quill before continuing.

“Sir Pembroke Henstridge.” An enormous leather-bound tome, 4’ wide and a foot thick, floats into view. Remarkably, the book has a dour face with rheumy eyes, a pinched nose, and mouth full of crooked, yellow teeth. A monocle is affixed over the tome’s left eye. Pembroke hovers over a bookstand on the desk, to the right of center.

“Archpreceptor Fantax of Aereth.” A wizened human with a pencil-thin mustache and long beard as white as a hare confidently approaches the central throne. The magician wears a forked conical hat the hue of cinnabar, a short-sleeved pastel green robe, and gold bangles. Fantax’s sly smile and narrow slanted eyes exude a phlegmatic aura. The mage strikes a bell with a small mallet and speaks in an authoritative voice, “Greetings be to all the children of the Cosmos. I hereby call this session to order.”

Once court is in session, the adventurers must wait for their turn at the podium. Several petitioners speak first, asking for such things as damages from another wizard for destroying property, altering the ratios of phlogiston and other elements in a remote star system, and business opportunities involving Ciz’s starport.

Then, the characters will be given details of the second challenge’s spell duel. See below for more information. All character classes that can participate in a spell duel are welcome to attempt the challenge; see Appendix A: Advanced Spell Duels for more information. Characters that accept the challenge will be asked to swear a solemn oath in open court to renounce diabolism, abide by the rulings of the cabal, and serve the greater good.

The parameters of the second challenge are as follows:

- At least two current cabal members must endorse the challenger.
- The challenger must choose and defeat a non-endorsing cabal member in a spell duel within 8 days.
- The spell duel is fought in a ceremonial chamber in the Grand Palace’s upper works. Duelists are stripped of all belongs except for a cloth robe. The two are sealed within the battle arena (see map) until a duelist submits or is reduced to zero hit points. Immediate first aid is given to the loser.
- A random, non-endorsing cabal member will cast *dispel magic* on each participant prior to battle. Evidence of cheating, such as a visible spell manifestation, results in disqualification.

Joining the Cabal: Joining the cabal has its benefits. Full members are given unfettered access to the plethora of spells, research, and alchemical instruments the organization has acquired over centuries. The athenaeum boasts the largest collection of books in the entire universe. Of course, full membership must be earned by apprenticing for several years. Members are also required to perform quests and other tasks, act as liaison on their home planet, and participate in the floating city’s defense. In time, the initiate will gain a seat on the council, acquire a tower of residence, and be allowed to perform rituals at the Conclave of Wizards.

INSIDE THE CABAL

By all appearances, the Star Cabal is a dignified and cohesive group. The public reveres the magicians as tireless defenders of the greater good, enforcing a system of checks and balances on powers that could hurl the cosmos into chaos if left unchecked. Behind closed doors, the story is vastly different. The cabalists are locked in a constant internal power struggle. Their court decisions are influenced more by graft, hidden motives, and secret alliances than altruism.

More than anything else, the magicians desire status, which is won through intimidation and backroom dealings. Though they have all benefitted from the resources accreted by the collective over hundreds of years, the magicians jealously guard their new research and wondrous items in an attempt to increase their reserves of arcane power. Irreconcilable disagreements within the group can be resolved with a trial by combat, but this is rare since cabalists fear that the others have hoarded unknown spells.

Magicians love the art of debate and forging alliances. Cabalists will attempt to win characters’ allegiance by exchanging favors, but one should exercise extreme caution in these

INTRODUCING THE MAGICIANS

dealings. Agreements with a magician are verbal contracts and the terms must be worded very carefully. A magician will exact very specific legal terms from the party while offering the vaguest terms possible in return. When it's time to collect on the favor, the magician only abides to the exact wording of the agreement. (The judge should write it down for later reference.) If there is any wiggle room for creative interpretation, the magician will exploit it. The magician also attempts to get the characters to perform illicit activities which can be later used as leverage.

The Star Cabal operates by its own rules, independent of the Law of Ciz:

1. *A magician may not profit by virtue of office.* In truth, all magicians are guilty of this to some degree. If irrefutable proof can be produced, the magician loses status and faces reprimand, punitive damages, or possible expulsion.
2. *A magician may not consort with demons.* The seductive influence of demons has corrupted members of the cabal in the past. All forms of diabolism, including the summoning of demons, are strictly forbidden. Violators are expelled, imprisoned in a pocket dimension, or sentenced to death, depending on the degree of involvement.
3. *A magician may not kill another magician.* Outside of ritual combat, magicide (if provable) is punishable by death, even if in self-defense.
4. *A magician's only kin is the cabal.* After a magician passes, all belongings are divided among the other surviving members.

To join the Star Cabal, initiates must obtain the endorsements of at least two members. Initiates may travel to a magician's tower to request an endorsement. Cabal members may also seek them out privately, hoping to use the neophytes as pawns in their schemes. Magicians only agree to parlay if the conversation is kept confidential.

All magicians have the goal of obtaining Reynard's missing artifact and one additional goal. Some goals may require the party to infiltrate a rival magician's tower. Getting caught in a magician's tower is not necessarily the end of the initiate's career. Magicians are cool-headed. They don't get mad. They get even. After interrogating their prisoners, magicians may free the adventurers if they agree to pay a fee or perform a service. Some magicians might implant a parasite or place a *geas* on the adventurers to ensure they don't renege on the deal.

Cabalists aren't always truthful. Each magician has a tell, an unconscious action they perform when they are being deceitful. When acting out the parts of the magicians, remember to add details of the tell when they lie.

On a final note, magicians have notoriously long memories. Stealing from another magician, failing to render a service, or betraying a confidence will not soon be forgotten. As the party finds their place among the cabal, they may end up making lifelong enemies.

Fantax

White-bearded, highest-ranking member of the cabal. He is a peacemaker with a willful blindness for the indiscretions of other magicians. He has a secret fondness for the characters because they hail from Aereth.

Alignment: Lawful.

Goals: Find out what happened to Reynard. Find incriminating evidence on Io.

Tell: Strokes beard.

Fantax: Init +4; Atk +4 Staff of the Archpreceptor +8 melee (1d6+4 plus 1d4 cold damage) or spell; AC 19; HD 10d6; hp 43; MV 30'; Act 2d20+1d14; SP *ring of fire resistance* (3/day), *wand of lightning bolt* (1/day), spellcasting (+13 spell check); SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +8; AL L.

Spells known: (Level 1) *magic missile, magic shield, sleep*; (Level 2) *spider web, wizard staff*; (Level 3) *consult spirit, dispel magic, fireball, planar step, turn to stone, write magic*; (Level 4) *control ice, polymorph, wizard sense*; (Level 5) *Lokerimon's unerring hunter, mind purge*.



Pembroke

A pedantic cognizancer whose consciousness has melded with his grimoire. His scholarly appearance is at odds with his gruff manner.

Alignment: Lawful.

Goals: Obtain space crystals. Recover a tome stolen by Quentin.

Tell: Clears throat.

Pembroke: Init +4; Atk bite +3 melee (1d4) or spell; AC 16; HD 9d6; hp 32; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP spellcasting (+11 spell check); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +5; AL L.

Spells known: (Level 1) *animal summoning, comprehend languages, magic shield*; (Level 2) *levitate, scorching ray, invisible companion*; (Level 3) *breathe life, dispel magic, eldritch hound, fly, write magic*; (Level 4) *polymorph, control fire*; (Level 5) *replication*.



Reynard

Reptiloid conjurer who disappeared while on a trip to the asteroid belt several weeks ago. Reynard was in possession of a magic artifact desired by all.

Reynard: Init +3; Atk +1 elven longsword +4 melee (1d8+1) or spell; AC 15; HD 8d6; hp 28; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP spellcasting (+10 spell check); SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +8; AL Unknown.

Spells known: (Level 1) *charm person, detect magic, force manipulation, magic missile*; (Level 2) *invisibility, invisible companion, mirror image*; (Level 3) *dispel magic, eternal champion, fly, turn to stone*; (Level 4) *control fire*.



Quentin

Ostentatious illusionist with sweaty hands and a bad comb-over. He overindulges in food and drink and is attended at all times by nubile fauntlets.

Alignment: Neutral.

Goals: Get revenge on Zaffir. Extort Mercantiles.

Tell: Wide grin.

Quentin: Init +3; Atk blackjack +6 melee (1d3/2d6), blowgun +4 missile fire (1d3/1d5) or spell; AC 15; HD 7d6; hp 25; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP +3 sneak attack, spellcasting (+9 spell check); SV Fort +4, Ref +8, Will +6; AL N.

Spells known: (Level 1) *force manipulation, magic shield*; (Level 2) *monster summoning, scare, spider web*; (Level 3) *dispel magic, fireball, haste, slow*; (Level 4) *control fire*.



Io

A shiny robot with devastating weapons and opaque motives. What virtual neural calculations are occurring in his quantum flux core?

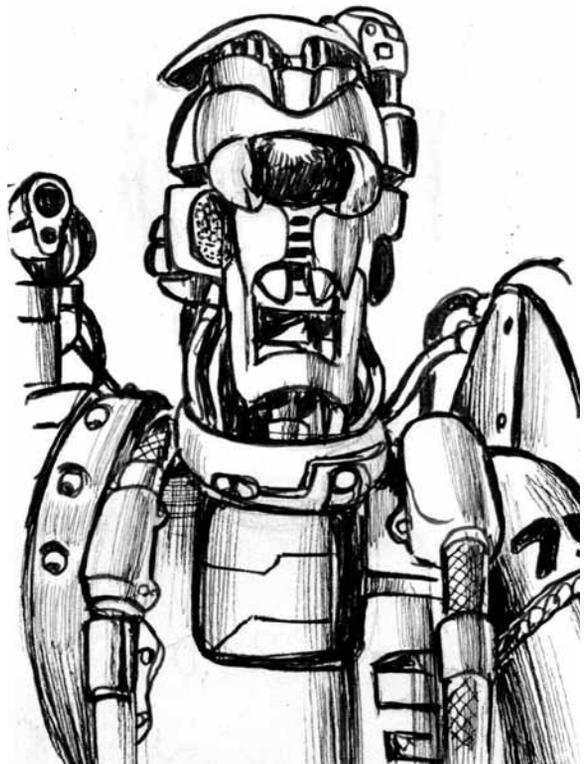
Alignment: Chaotic.

Goals: Obtain Brigger logic board. Exterminate Fantax. Reboot Ciz to robot rule.

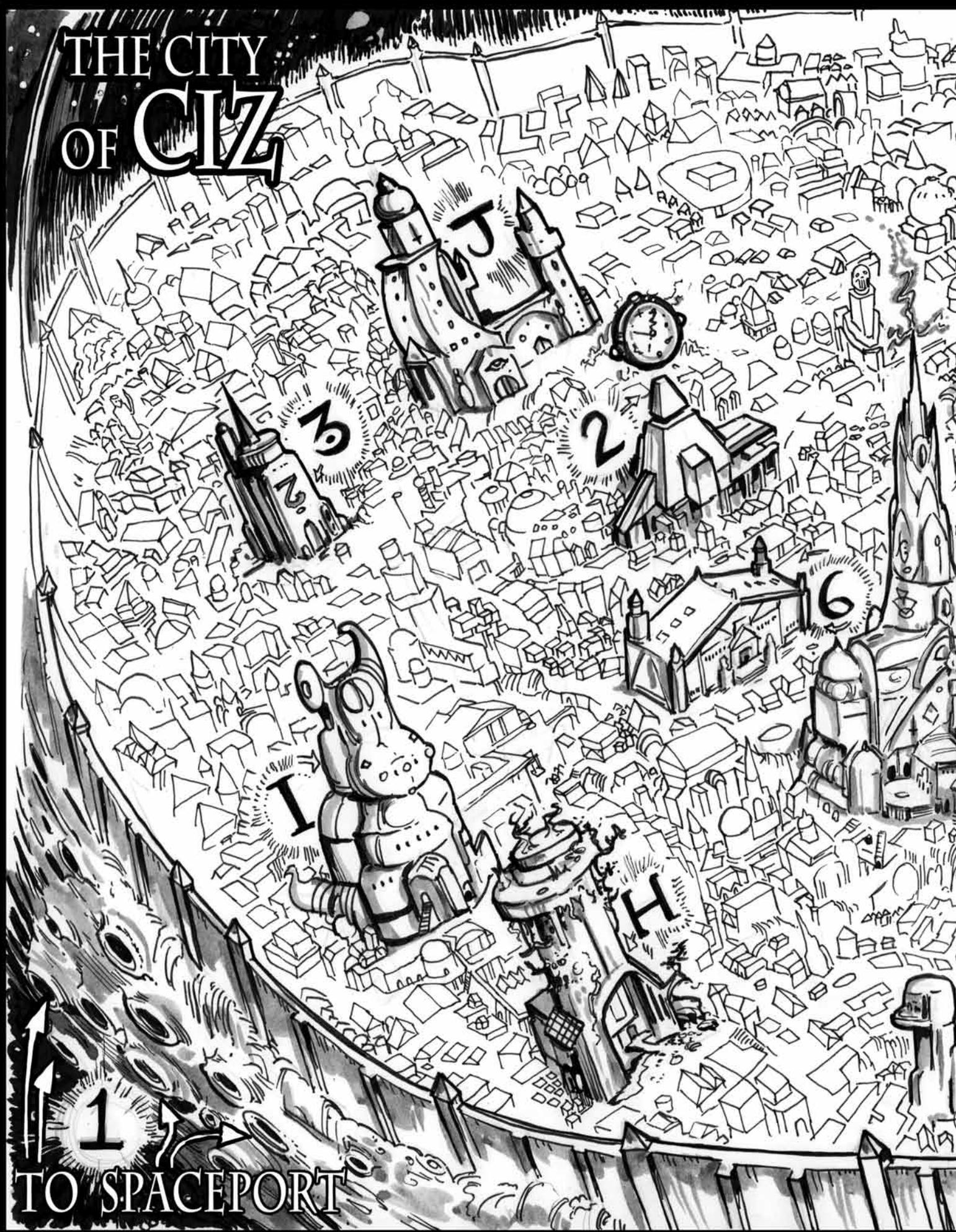
Tell: Says "Loading..."

Io: Init +3; Atk clamp +8 melee (1d12) or spell; AC 19; HD 8d12; hp 78; MV 35'; Act 2d20; SP spellcasting (+12 spell check); SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +6; AL C.

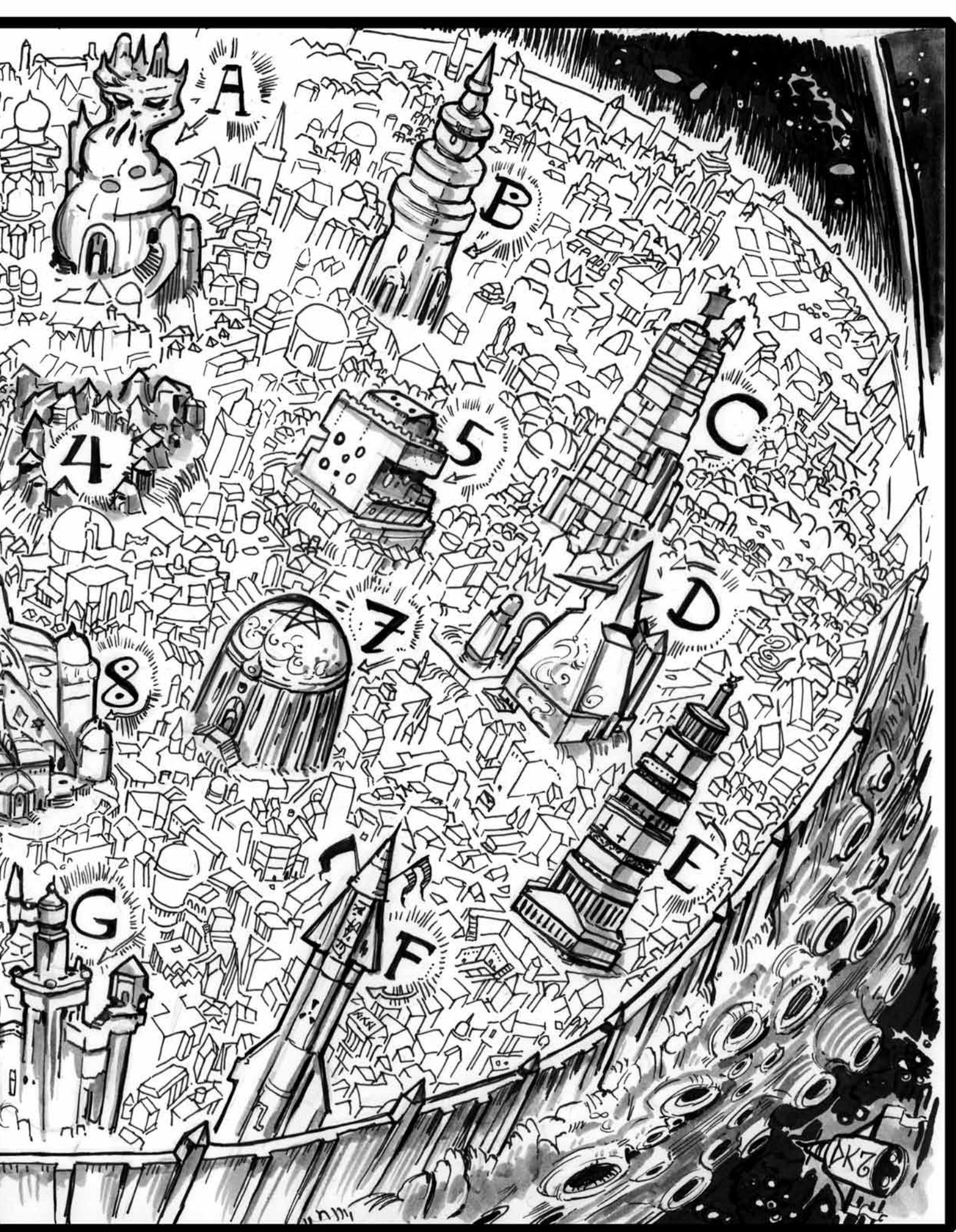
Spells known: (Level 1) *flamethrower (as flaming hands), force manipulation, heat-seeking missiles (as magic missile)*; (Level 2) *GPS (as locate object), laser (as scorching ray)*; (Level 3) *dispel magic, jump jets (as fly)*; (Level 4) *control fire, control ice*.



THE CITY OF CIZ



TO SPACEPORT



Mygab

Moody closet diabolist who is controlled like a puppet by his familiar. The three-eyed, white cat is the demon lord Renos Tak in disguise.

Alignment: Chaotic.

Goals: Obtain Reynard's baton first. Corrupt or kill Rhauche. Dissolve the Grand Ward and release Shigazilnizthrub.

Tell: Strokes cat.

Mygab: Init +2; Atk +1 oaken staff +7 melee (1d6) or spell; AC 14; HD 6d6; hp 22; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d16; SP spellcasting (+8 spell check); SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +6; AL C.

Spells known: (Level 1) *chill touch, choking cloud, magic missile, magic shield*; (Level 2) *monster summoning, ray of enfeeblement*; (Level 3) *demon summoning, dispel magic, lightning bolt*.



Zaffir

A mute alien that wears a caftan and weaves spells with a fife. Zaffir speaks by playing a telepathy song.

Alignment: Neutral.

Goals: Plant sentient flower on asteroid. Steal botany books from Guise.

Tell: Plays a trill or arpeggio.

Zaffir: Init +2; Atk +1 oaken staff +7 melee (1d6) or spell; AC 14; HD 6d6; hp 22; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d16; SP spellcasting (+7 spell check); SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +6; AL N.

Spells known: (Level 1) *charm person, sleep*; (Level 2) *ESP, forget, invisibility, phantasm*; (Level 3) *dispel magic, paralysis, transference*.



Rhauche

A bloated toad-like alien with jeweled teeth. Rhauche draws power from the many rings on his fingers. A sixth finger was magically grown on each hand to accommodate more rings.

Alignment: Neutral.

Goals: Alter spaceport logs. Smuggle shipment from asteroid into city. Steal Mygah's cat.

Tell: Licks lips.

Rhauche: Init +2; Atk +1 oaken staff +7 melee (1d6) or spell; AC 14; HD 6d6; hp 22; MV 30'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP spellcasting (+6 spell check); SV Fort +3, Ref +3, Will +5; AL N.

Spells known: (Level 1) *magic missile*, *magic shield*, *ropework*; (Level 2) *levitate*, *scorching ray*, *spider web*; (Level 3) *dispel magic*, *gust of wind*.



Guise

An archwitch with a talent for creating creatures at her vats.

Alignment: Neutral.

Goals: Obtain living mermitees from asteroid. Discredit Pembroke.

Tell: Looks up at ceiling.

Guise: Init +3; Atk +2 dagger +5 melee (1d4+2) or spell; AC 15; HD 8d6; hp 28; MV 30'; Act 2d20; SP *wand of fireball* (2/day); spellcasting (+10 spell check); SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +8; AL N.

Spells known: (Level 1) *magic missile*, *magic shield*, *flaming hands*, *sleep*; (Level 2) *Nythuul's porcupine coat*, *mirror image*; (Level 3) *dispel magic*, *lightning bolt* (Level 4) *transmute earth*.



THE MAGICIANS' TOWERS



The city of Ciz is well known for the extraordinary skyline formed by the magicians' towers that lord majestic over the ever-changing configuration of alien habitations. The towers all have unique appearances, displaying the architectural styles prominent in the occupant's homeland. Each tower is a fiefdom unto itself. The Briggers are verboten from entering any building controlled by the cabal. The rules of conduct are dictated by the whims of the residing magician.

Infiltrating a wizardly stronghold is a foolhardy endeavor. A magician's tower is equal parts sanctuary, vault, and death trap. Arcane wards, devious traps, and enchanted monsters protect the cabalist's treasured artifacts and magical research.

JUDGE'S NOTES

Detailing each magician's tower in full could easily fill the entire book. The sections below detail a method for generating a tower on the fly. Read the "Outer Defenses" and "Tower Generation" sections to start, followed by the keyed entry for the individual wizards' tower details.

Once the PCs have breached the tower's outer defenses, roll on Table T-1: Tower Floor Plan each time a new floor is entered. The key for each floor tells you what features are on the level (and what tables to roll on). Flesh out the description of the floor with details from each magician tower's keyed section.

What is the purpose of the PCs trespassing? It is likely that they are searching for an object, seeking information, or simply on a larcenous spree. Whatever the reason, the object of the party's desire should be located after exploring 1d10+1 floors.

Remember the cabalists are by and large power-hungry and vainglorious. While a character death may be unavoidable, the intention of most traps is to capture or incapacitate intruders. Guardians accept surrender from an adventuring party at any point. Defeated party members will be imprisoned within the tower until the magician returns to interrogate them. If the adventurers can further the magician's schemes, they can probably strike a bargain to gain

their freedom. Stroking their captor's ego probably won't hurt. Otherwise, the prisoners will be condemned to slowly perish in a death trap, or banished to a quasiplace.

OUTER DEFENSES

The towers have several points of obvious entry. The front door at the base of the tower is easy to access, but guaranteed to be heavily guarded. Entrances on balconies, parapets, and pinnacles are less defended though harder to access. Windows are usually shuttered, sealed with magic, or set with heavy iron bars. Certain spells and magic items may also allow access.

Guardians: All doors are protected by a contingent of guards. Intruders should take precautions to conceal their identities. In addition to being identified by guards, many magicians have the power of remote seeing.

Cabal guards (1d6+1): Init +2; Atk polearm +4 melee (1d10); AC 16; HD 3d8; hp 14; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +2; AL L.

Defenses: Unless otherwise noted, the outside doors and windows of all towers are magically sealed and trapped (DC 15 Find/Disable Trap checks; 1d6+4 damage), and inside doors are locked (DC 15 Pick Lock check). Additional information is detailed in the keyed tower sections (A-J) below.

TOWER GENERATION

Supernatural forces have been woven directly into the tower walls, granting eerie properties. Pocket dimensions and extraplanar enchantments allow the structures to be larger, smaller, or shaped differently on the inside than the outside. A return visit to the tower may reveal an unrecognizable floor plan as the rooms and entire floors can be rearranged at their master's will.

For each newly discovered floor, roll 1d16 on Table T-1: Tower Floor Plan. The letters on the floors denote the location of guardians, traps, or loot:

- (G) = Guardians. See Table T-2: Guardian Encounters
- (T) = Traps. See Table T-3: Magical Traps
- (L) = Loot. See Table T-4: Loot

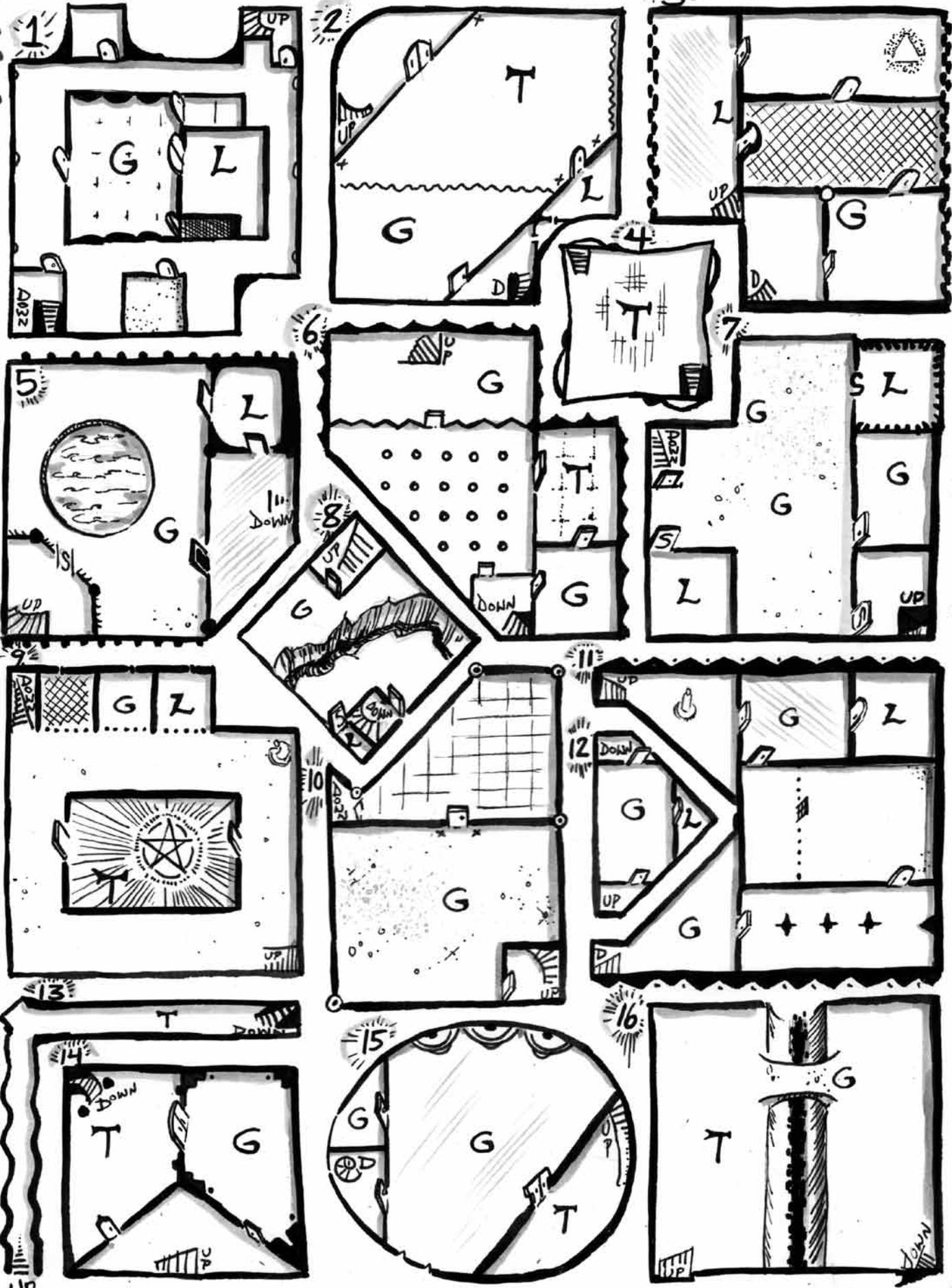
SCHRODINGER'S PLOT DEVICE

During the course of the adventure, the players may become curious about the whereabouts of the missing magician, Reynard. We know the magician was in a possession of a powerful artifact called the *Baton of Perpetual Light*. This magic item could be used to more accurately and quickly pinpoint the location of a gathering super ley line. In the wrong hands, this item could be used to capitalize on the supermagical location before other spellcasters. Reynard mysteriously vanished several weeks ago, and his wondrous item now powers demonic rituals in a prison plane known as "The Black" (see "Challenge Three" for more information).

The details of Reynard's intrigue are purposefully excluded from the adventure. Posed with an enigma, human beings are naturally drawn to inferring conclusions. If your players become sufficiently interested in Reynard, they will throw all sort of wild theories back and forth. Was Reynard the victim of foul play, or is he lurking in the shadows waiting to put an evil scheme into motion at the next Conclave of Wizards? Incorporate the ideas you like into the adventure. In short order, the players will create the plot for you. You will likely end up with a more engaging story than you could have thought of alone, and the players will feel the satisfaction of solving a difficult challenge.

Table T-1: Tower Floor Plan

WARD TOWER GENERATOR



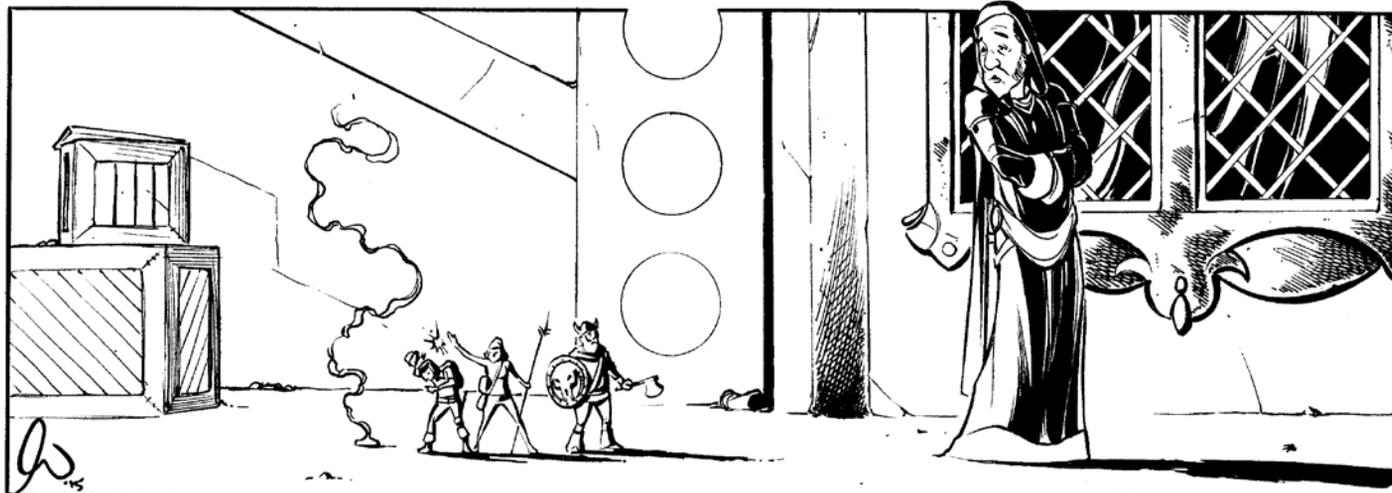
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Table T-2: Guardian Encounters

1d30	Encounter Details (Note: encounters referencing a "guardian" indicate those guardians specified in the keyed magician's towers A-J, as specified below)
1	Ambush! Roll on this table again. Foes attack party with surprise.
2	<p>Concealed by an <i>invisibility</i> spell, the magician's understudy bitterly chastises the intruders to exit presently or be laid low.</p> <p>Understudy: Init +4; Atk longsword +3 melee (1d8), longbow +1 missile fire (1d6), or spell; AC 14; HD 5d8; hp 23; MV 25'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP familiar, spellcasting (+9 spell check); SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; AL same as master.</p> <p>Spells known: (Level 1) <i>cantrip</i>, <i>flaming hands</i>, <i>magic shield</i> (cast nocturnally at +1d), <i>ward portal</i>; (Level 2) <i>dispel magic</i>, <i>invisibility</i>; (Level 3) <i>fireball</i> (inept, cast at -1d).</p>
3-10	2d6 cabal guards.
11-19	1d8 cabal guards and 1 guardian (or use suggested number of guardians).
20-27	1d6 guardians (or use suggested number of guardians).
28-29	2d4 guardians (or use double suggested number of guardians).
30	Wizard sight. <i>1st roll:</i> The magician's disembodied voice resounds through the room demanding to know the reason for this affront. <i>2nd roll:</i> The magician appears bodily and attacks. The magician can cast any number of protective spells before arriving.

Table T-3: Magical Traps

1d14	Trap Details
1	<p>Magnetic baton. <i>This area is being used as a temporary scrapyard. Iron rods, metal grates, and dented armor are piled in heaps along the walls. A stone pedestal is positioned in the center of the room. A glass dome with a handle on top rests on the pedestal. Inside, you see a red velvet pillow and the glint of a purple light refracted in a gemstone.</i></p> <p>A thick gold ring inset with an enormous glowing amethyst rests on a velvet pillow under the glass dome. The pedestal holds no indication of trap. However, the image beneath the dome is only an illusion. The glass dome conceals a 3" tall black metal baton charged with a magnetic hyper-repulsion field. The rod's power is held in check by the leaded glass composition of the dome. Lifting the dome releases the rod's pent-up energy.</p> <p>All metal items are repelled radially from the rod with great force, and pinned to the walls of the room. The magnetic field does not extend beyond the confines of the room. Characters wearing metal armor (including studded leather and scale mail or greater armor) are slammed against the wall, taking damage equal to their armor's fumble die. If the character who lifted the dome was wearing metal armor, the glass dome falls to the ground and shatters. Otherwise, it may be replaced to nullify the effect. Armored characters are pinned flat against the wall.</p> <p>Roll initiative. The party has three rounds to escape until guards arrive (roll on Table T-2: Guardian Encounters at the beginning of the fourth round). Pinned characters in metal armor must make two Fort or Ref saves (DC 10 + AC bonus) to slip out of their armor. Once freed, a character may drag his or her armor along the wall to escape the room.</p>



2	<p>Mist monster. <i>Bookshelves and stacks of books are piled to the rafters in this room. At the far end of the room, copper tubing spirals around a glass beaker gurgling on a workbench. A cauldron of vile black liquid bubbles and foams over a dying fire in the hearth. Jars and bottles of herbs are crammed into every available nook and cranny.</i></p> <p>The shelves here are packed with a seemingly endless supply of botanical catalogues. The practitioner using this workbench is performing some sort alchemical research, but there are no notes or ingredient lists to speak of. The glass beaker contains a solution that smells like bleach. There are four bottles of colored liquid on the bench: red, green, yellow, and blue.</p> <p>The trap is sprung when anything is moved on the workbench:</p> <p><i>You hear the resounding thud of heavy metal plates as thick clouds rapidly billow from the cauldron, obscuring your vision. Columns of mist form into silent leering faces swiping at you with wispy thin arms tipped by tiny grasping claws. You hear the startled cries of your compatriots all around yet see no one.</i></p> <p>This trap is little different than most. After reading or paraphrasing the read-aloud text, place Handout A in front of the players covered with a piece of paper. Warn your players to take heed, then uncover the handout for 3 seconds and cover it again. Tally the amount of damage the mist monster receives every round. This number is be used to determine how much time the players get to see the uncovered handout. At the end of every round, divide the damage tally by 10, rounding to nearest whole number. Get the attention of the players before revealing the handout for as many seconds. There are no do-overs. For example, if the mist monster took 34 damage in a round, the handout would be revealed for 3 seconds ($34 \div 10 = 3.4$ rounded down to 3).</p> <p>The doors can be opened and the mist trap disabled by pulling the lever next to the skull at the bottom right corner of the centermost bookshelf. All exits are sealed by 4" thick black metal plates with no visible lock mechanism. For purposes of destruction, each door has AC 22 and 120 hp.</p> <p>Messing with the cauldron to disable the trap is an exercise in futility. Dumping the cauldron has no effect. Pouring the alchemical bottles into the cauldron has mostly negative consequences:</p> <p>Glass beaker: The bleach solution slightly weakens the mist. Double all handout viewing times.</p> <p>Red bottle: The mist turns red. Claw attacks gain +1d3 fire damage, but the mist takes double damage from ice-based attacks.</p> <p>Green bottle: The mist turns green. Replace choking cloud with poison cloud (DC 20 Fort save or paralyzed 2d4 hours).</p> <p>Yellow bottle: The mist turns yellow. Choking cloud becomes more noxious (DC 20 Fort save or knocked unconscious 1d3 days).</p> <p>Blue bottle: The mist turns blue. Claw attacks gain +1d3 frost damage, but the mist takes double damage from fire-based attacks.</p> <p>Mist Monster: Init +25; Atk claw +20 melee (1d8 plus choking cloud); AC 14; HD 65d30; hp 1,008; MV 10'; Act special; SP claw all targets within 40'x40' space, half damage from non-area attacks, choking cloud (DC 15 Fort save or knocked unconscious 1d4 hours); SV Fort +8, Ref +16, Will +10; AL N.</p>
3	<p>Crypto-Maze. <i>Your forehead suddenly smacks into an invisible barrier with a sharp crack. You stagger backward a half step before feeling another barrier behind. Feeling around with your hands, you discover you are imprisoned in some sort of narrow hallway.</i></p> <p>A maze trap is triggered when the party is halfway across the room. The maze is constructed from invisible force fields extending to the ceiling that reconfigure as a captive moves through it. The adventurers can walk through the narrow maze, but will soon discover they are unable to backtrack. There is only a single path that leads out of the maze.</p> <p>The solution to escaping the maze is to look up at the ceiling. An unbroken line is etched in the ceiling showing the path to the exit. Characters can escape by walking directly under this path.</p> <p>If the adventurers unanimously resign themselves to defeat, they can wait for rescue. The resident magician will appear in several hours and instruct the party on how to exit the maze in exchange for certain favors.</p>

4	<p>Garden fountain. <i>You enter an immense indoor garden splended by an immaculate stone fountain 50' across. Water gushes from a large urn held by a merman statuary striking a masculine pose. An engraved brass plaque rests on the fountain's edge.</i></p> <p>The plaque reads, "With the gratitude of Merlandia, a champion for all ages: Pooblipdoop." The cool waters are in truth the resting form of an enormous water elemental known as Pooblipdoop, "Terror of the Seventy-Seven Seas," "Drowner of Cities," and "Swimming Death." Drinking or touching the water in the fountain triggers it to rise into the air in a massive column and take the watery form of an adult sea dragon. The sadistic predator accepts no quarter. Once disturbed, Pooblipdoop doggedly pursues intruders from room to room as long as they remain within the tower, then she drags her drowned prizes back to the fountain to bloat in her magnificence.</p> <p>Pooblipdoop: Init +11; Atk claw/claw/bite +15 melee (1d8/1d8/1d12) and spell; AC 25; HD 11d12; hp 48; MV 50' or climb 50' or swim 100'; Act 3d20+1d12(spell); SP fire breath 2/day (5d12 damage or DC 21 Ref save for half), immune to fire, detect dwarves within 100', corrupt water (poison water within 100', DC 21 Fort save or 1d4 damage per sip), spider climb, spellcasting (+6 spell check); SV Fort +11, Ref +15, Will +11; AL C.</p> <p>Spells known: (Level 1) <i>detect magic, force manipulation, invoke patron</i> (Ithha, prince of elemental wind), <i>sleep, runic alphabet</i> (mortal), <i>ward portal</i>.</p>
5	<p>Shrink rune. <i>You spot a carelessly dropped electrum piece on the floor.</i></p> <p>The lost coin covers an eldritch sigil. Picking up the coin releases the rune's power which shrinks all living creatures and their carried items within 20' to a quarter of their natural size for 2d6 hours. The diminution grants all foes giant-like stature. Their action die increase by one size (e.g., a d20 becomes a d24), their critical threat range becomes anything greater than 20, and critical hits are rolled as giants (Crit Table G, DCC RPG pg. 389). The rune dissolves once triggered. On the plus side, the party gets to keep the electrum piece.</p>
6	<p>Summoning circuit. <i>A strange sight freezes you in your tracks: a row of freshly spread fine ash. A thin line stretches from wall to wall. You cannot cross the room without stepping over it.</i></p> <p>The line of ash creates an ethereal circuit between two invisible runes. Breaking the line or stepping over the boundary breaks the circuit and triggers a summoning trap. The trap casts <i>monster summoning</i> with a +8 bonus to the spell check (1d20+8) with a 1 round casting time. Roll on the manifestation table for the appearance. Corruption and misfires target the closest creature within 20'. Summoned monsters immediately attack the party.</p>
7	<p>Death curse. In the next combat, the first foe reduced to zero hit points hexes its slayer with the "Curse of Haunted Repose." Before dying, the vanquished recites the following lines: "<i>I vow in death to gather souls / The tormented thou did slay. / In slumber, hear our baleful dirge / Endless visits wilt we pay. / 'Til vanish thou this mortal coil / Or forever and a day.</i>"</p> <p>This vengeful curse is only effective when uttered in the throes of death. It causes the souls of slain foes to yammer, wail, and moan whenever the target falls asleep, ruining any chance of recovering health, ability points, or regaining lost spells. The curse carries a -4 Luck penalty and a cumulative -1 penalty to Fort, Ref, and Will saves after every night's rest.</p> <p>The curse can be remedied several ways. Resurrecting the curse invoker effectively ends the hex as their spirit will no longer hold sway over the dead. A sufficiently powerful <i>remove curse</i> spell is just as effective. Careful adherence to the terms of the curse can also terminate its power. In this particular wording of the curse, the term "'Til vanish thou this mortal coil" can be willfully interpreted several ways. The phrase could be twisted to mean turning invisible, teleporting, traveling to another plane, or being resurrected oneself. Of course, the simple act of quaffing an invisibility potion does not end the curse. This action lacks the critically important element of intent. The cursed individual must specifically state their intent to end the curse based upon a technicality before imbibing the potion.</p>
8	<p>Tasteless decor. <i>The floor in the next room is covered in alternating mauve and taupe tiles in a checkerboard pattern. Each tile is embossed with unrecognized glyphs.</i></p> <p>The floor tile is hideous, but otherwise unremarkable.</p>



9	<p>Timbant's Plethoric Transmogrification. A pressure plate in the floor (DC 20 Find/Disable Trap checks) causes drop panels to open on the nearest wall. A pair of hidden nozzles zap the target with <i>Timbant's Spell of Plethoric Transmogrification</i>. The victim's molecular bonds expand and contract in an infinite feedback loop while leaving their items unscathed. One nozzle sucks in the molecules, and another shoots them out. Show players Handout B.</p> <p>Escaping the trap is tortuous without a <i>dispel magic</i> spell. Any movement besides speaking causes a jolt of intense pain (1d4 damage). The target can be forced out of the feedback loop using a lasso or other implement, but it causes 2d6 damage and 1d3 temporary Stamina loss. Another character can also bull rush the target to swap places.</p>
10	<p>Trapdoor. <i>An odd assortment of taxidermied animal heads are mounted on plaques high on the wall. A metal trapdoor is positioned in the center of the ceiling 20' above. A cord tied to the trapdoor's handle dangles 10' beyond your reach.</i></p> <p>The trapdoor is only a façade attached to the ceiling meant to delay burglars. Prying the trapdoor open with a crowbar (DC 15 Strength check) or destroying it (60 hp) breaks the mounting bolts. The door crashes to the floor to reveal the empty space behind.</p> <p>The animal heads are imbued with polymorphing radiation. After spending a minute in this room, the characters begin transforming into animals. Roll 1d10: (1) jackass; (2) tortoise; (3) cat; (4) pig; (5) hare; (6) toad; (7) goat; (8) cow; (9) snake; (10) chicken. The transformation takes 5 rounds: (1) ears and noses change; (2) skin sprouts fur, feathers, or scales; (3) head changes; (4) hands and feet change; (5) transformation complete. Exiting the room halts the progression. The effects of the transformation reverse 1d4 days after leaving the tower.</p>
11	<p>Abnormal gravity. One door in the room is secured by a gravity trap (DC 20 Find Trap check). The lock is opened by a wooden key. The trap can be disabled (DC 20 Disable Trap check), but inserting metal picks into the lock grounds the circuit that triggers the trap. Every round until disarmed, gravity turns sideways in the direction of the furthest wall. Creatures take 1d6 damage per 10' fallen. Gravitation changes are confined to the room.</p>
12	<p>Shhh! A trigger filament, millimeters from the floor, stretches across the room. When triggered, heavy metal portcullises drop over the exits (DC 25 Pick Lock check) and a zone of silence is created. The characters cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components while in the room.</p>
13	<p>Demonic army. <i>A door suddenly explodes off its hinges, rockets across the room, and splinters on the wall. A red, hulking giant with goat legs, batwings, and a flaming whip ducks through the door flanked by a throng of black, maggot-faced minions. "Your souls are mine. Seize them!"</i></p> <p>The door and the demons are illusory. If the party stands their ground, roll initiative and pretend there are 8 monsters. On each monster's turn, roll 1d20 and say the attack missed. No matter what the players roll – even if they burn 10 points of Luck or spellburn to the ground – tell them their attacks miss. If the players don't see through the illusion after the third round, real reinforcements arrive. Roll on Table T-2: Guardian Encounters.</p>
14	<p>Crusher. When the PCs enter the room, describe a throw lever attached to the farthest visible wall. When the characters have all entered the room, two translucent, seemingly phantasmal spiked walls begin rapidly closing around the party. The walls, however, are quite solid and will impale the characters. The trap is disabled by throwing the lever which can be seen through the ghostly walls.</p> <p>In round one, the walls appear. They can be halted by a successful DC 20 Strength check against each. If the adventurers fail to hold a wall in place in any round, the spikes begin wounding the players, automatically hitting for 1d6 every round. Proceed in initiative order until the trap is disabled.</p> <p>Any number of spells can be used to flip the switch, such as <i>cantrip</i> and <i>ropework</i>. There is a 3" gap between the phantasms and the walls, floor, and ceiling. A called shot with a ranged weapon might also work (target AC 25).</p>

Table T-4: Loot

1d6	Container	Treasure item
1	Plain sight (1 roll)	Skunked. Roll 1d6: (1) moldy bread; (2) rotten bananas; (3) rancid rations; (4) dead rodent; (5) wadded paper; (6) cockroaches.
2	Hollow book (1 roll)	Coins. Roll 1d5: (1) 4d20 x 10 cp; (2) 3d12 x 10 sp; (3) 2d3 x 10 gp; (4) 1d2 x 5 ep; (5) 1 pp.
3	Bag (2 rolls)	Gems. Roll 1d5 for quantity. Roll 1d8 for quality: (1) cut glass (worthless); (2) flawed (-50% value); (3-6) average; (7) expertly cut (+50% value); (8) flawless (+100% value). Roll 1d5 for type: (1) pearl, agate, or turquoise (10 gp); (2) carnelian, moonstone, or peridot (20 gp); (3) amber, amethyst, or jade (50 gp); (4) emerald, ruby, or sapphire (100 gp); (5) diamond (500 gp).
4	Lockbox (1d3 rolls)	Jewel-encrusted weapon. Roll 1d6: (1) battleaxe (70 gp); (2) dagger (30 gp); (3) flail (60 gp); (4) longsword (100 gp); (5) mace (50 gp); (6) warhammer (50 gp).
5	Drawer (1d4 roll)	Potion. Roll 1d6: (1) <i>animal control</i> ; (2) <i>fire resistance</i> ; (3) <i>flying</i> ; (4) <i>healing</i> ; (5) <i>poison</i> ; (6) <i>speed</i> . For effects, see DCC RPG, pgs. 224-225.
6	Chest (1d6 rolls)	Luxury item. Roll 1d8: (1) fancy clothing (50 gp); (2) silver goblet (25 gp); (3) gemstone ring (100 gp); (4) golden crown (200 gp); (5) bolt of silk (25 gp); (6) painting (40 gp); (7) fine wine (75 gp); (8) blank spell book (50 gp).

TOWER DETAILS

This section contains keyed map entries for each magician's stronghold. Each entry contains a description of the tower's appearance, guardians with stat blocks, and an explanation of any additional defenses. These entries are mere outlines. The judge is encouraged to embellish to his or her heart's content.

A - Fantax's Tower: The highest-ranking magician's tower is furnished like a museum of oddities. The air is tinged by the scent of sweet pipe smoke. Display cabinets filled with curios, strange artifacts, and jars of pickled specimens line the walls of every floor. The items on display are accompanied by folded-over notecards labeled in a meticulous hand containing curious phrases such as "The Eye of Promundo," "Flegro faetus (16 weeks)," "Crystal warts," and so on.

Guardians: Taxidermied exotic beasts are tastefully arranged among the display cases in life-like poses. Several floors also contain dioramas featuring several stuffed animals in replicas of their native habitat. Fantax has ensorcelled the taxidermy with some of his power. The magician can remotely see through the beasts' eyes and order them to animate and attack.

Roll 1d8 to determine creature type: (1) giant weasel (solitary); (2) 1d4 owl-boars; (3) bear-skin rug (solitary; SP successful +4 grapple attack smothers for 1d6 damage each round until target escapes); (4) 2d3 winged lemurs; (5) 2d6 octobats; (6) 1d4 deer; (7) 1d5 dire ocelots; (8) albino trait; roll 1d7 again for creature type.

Taxidermied Animal: Init +6; Atk bite +6 melee (2d6+2) or claw +8 melee (2d4); AC 18; HD 4d8; hp 18; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SP vulnerable to fire, immune to mind-affecting spells; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +4; AL N.

Taxidermied Animal (solitary): Init +8; Atk bite +8 melee (2d8+4) or claw +10 melee (2d6); AC 20; HD 8d8+4; hp 40; MV 40'; Act 3d20; SP vulnerable to fire, immune to mind-affecting spells; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +4; AL N.

Defenses: Fantax's tower is impervious to all forms of scrying, summoning, and teleportation. All outside doors and windows are magically sealed and trapped; all display cases and 50% of inside doors are locked and trapped (DC 20 Find/Disable Trap checks; 1d4+5 damage plus poison). When a trap is triggered, tiny darts fire from various holes disguised by masonry. The darts are dipped in a mild alkaline poison that induces paralysis for 1d4 hours. Fantax is immediately alerted when intruders enter his stronghold. Shortly thereafter, the master magician casts *Lokerimon's Unerring Hunter* summoning a greater hunter with instructions to capture the party's strongest spellcaster alive. The creature is wiry with dark, hairless skin the color of matte obsidian and long white fangs protruding over its lips. It relentlessly pursues its quarry for 1 month or until killed.

Unerring Hunter, Greater: Init +5, Atk bite +8 melee (4d10+4) or paralyzing touch (DC 15 Fort save or paralyzed 2d4 days); AC 21; HD 10d8+8; MV 50'; Act 2d20; SP half damage from normal weapons, camouflage, see invisible; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +4; AL N.

B - Pembroke's Tower: Fantax's second-in-command resides in an opulent bibliothèque. Pembroke's marvelous collection of books is rivaled only by the Athenaeum. Leather-bound tomes pack the mahogany bookshelves stretching from floor to ceiling. Tufted chaises and reading desks are arranged neatly between them. Pembroke's true mortal form lies hidden somewhere within the tower slumbering in a glass coffin. His body is rumored to be hideously deformed by spell corruption.

Guardians: The tower is kept in perfect order by a staff of animated household items and invisible servants. Characters that secret themselves for any amount of time are likely to see floating brooms sweeping the floor. The enchanted housekeepers have a 50% chance of detecting intruders within 10' and actively defend the tower.

Roll 1d8 to get a starting number of items. A roll of 8 indicates that a golem forms from the books on the shelves. Each time an 8 is rolled thereafter, the number of golems appearing increases by 1. Otherwise, roll 1d8 as many times as needed to determine the guardians: (1) broom; (2) dustpan; (3) unseen servant; (4) feather duster; (5) bucket of water; (6) mop; (7) shadow; (8) candelabra. The last remaining household item always flees and has a 20% cumulative chance each round to trigger another guardian encounter.

Household Item: Init +2; Atk bludgeon +6 melee (1d8+1); AC 15; HD 4d8; hp 18; MV fly 40'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +2; AL N.

Book Golem: Init +2; Atk fist +6 melee (1d6+3); AC 18; HD 7d10; hp 39; MV 20'; Act 2d20; SP if both fist attacks land on one target, the golem falls in a pile onto the target causing an extra 1d6 damage and immobilizing target for 1 round; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +4; AL N.

Defenses: Pembroke's tower is impervious to all forms of scrying, summoning, and teleportation. All outside doors and windows are magically sealed and trapped (DC 20 Find/Disable Trap checks; 1d8+4 shock damage). Inside doors are locked (DC 20 Pick Lock check). Just finding a door is difficult; every inside door is a cantilevered and cleverly disguised bookshelf (DC 15 Intelligence check to spot, or push an appropriate shelf). The magician is intuitively aware of intruders entering his tower.

C – Reynard's Tower: A stale reptilian musk permeates Reynard's arid tower. The architecture and furnishings are constructed almost entirely from sandstone blocks cut with simple angular designs. Everything is covered by a layer of fine red dust ostensibly kicked up from the sun-baked clay tiles on the floor. The only flourishes in the drab surroundings are terra cotta pots filled with succulents and cacti.

Guardians: Since Reynard's disappearance, Fantax has redoubled patrols in the tower. Increase all cabal guards at a post by 1d6. Reynard was a practicing herpetoculturist, but no one has been feeding his specimens for several weeks now. The ravenous creatures have taken to eating one another. Only the largest and surliest specimens remain.

Roll 1d7 to determine creature type: (1) 1d3 giant lizards (SP camouflage, +10 to hide); (2) 2d3 crocodiles; (3) anaconda (SP successful bite grapples target, 1d6 damage to constricted targets); (4) komodo dragon (+2 AC); (5) 1d4 gila monsters (SP poison bite, DC 18 Fort save or +1d6 damage); (6) giant snapping turtle (+4 AC); (7) fire-breathing (SP flame jet +10 missile fire, 50' range, 3d6 damage); roll 1d6 and consult list again.

Reptile, Large: Init -2; Atk bite +5 melee (3d4); AC 17; HD 4d8; hp 18; MV 40' or climb 20'; Act 1d20; SP varies; SV Fort +5, Ref -1, Will -1; AL N.

Defenses: If Reynard does not return soon, the other cabal members get to split up the powerful items in his vaults. Fantax personally placed a ward upon the tower to discourage presumptuous magicians. The tower is impervious to all forms of scrying, summoning, and teleportation. The tower's external entrances are locked (DC 25 Pick Lock check) and trapped (DC 25 Find/Disable Trap checks, 2d10+2 fire damage from napalm spray).

D – Guise's Tower: The atmosphere in the tower of the archwitch Guise is cramped and disheveled. Cloying incense covers the unmistakable odor of sorcery. Shelves packed with strange books line the walls. Drying reagents, various and sundry, hang from strings affixed to the cobwebbed ceiling. Every room also contains cauldrons and vats overflowing with steaming viscous liquids. Odd creatures with rubbery flesh can be seen slumbering just below the surface. It is mystifying how a powerful magician could live among such squalor.

Guardians: The halls of Guise's tower are too cluttered for foot patrols. The cabal guards remain stationed at fixed locations. The archwitch relies on creatures she creates in her vats to repel interlopers. These vat things have bizarre and varied physiologies, each seemingly bred to perform a singular task. Here is a creature made from two legs conjoined to a single arm at the hip. It wanders from cauldron to cauldron stirring with a stick. Here is another: a muscular leg with one large eye pogoing on a bellows. And there yet another: an oversized baby head with bat wings flies through the air clenching a bundle of dried herbs in its teeth. The hairless, pink abominations fearlessly defend their mistress's domain to the death.

Vat Thing: Init +0; Atk bite +1 melee (1d6+1), club +3 melee (1d8+2), or rock +3 missile fire (1d6+1); AC 14; HD 2d10; hp 11; MV 20'; Act 2d20; SP harmful spell 1/day (2d4 damage to target within 30', no save); SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +2; AL N.

Defenses: Powerful ensorcellments protect Guise's tower from the influence of scrying, summoning, and teleportation. The outside entrances and the doors located on the first floor explored are made of stout oak and locked with conventional locks (DC 15 Pick Lock check). Stronger defenses await deeper within the tower. The doors are made of riveted iron secured with heavy padlocks (DC 20 Pick Lock check, or 60 hp for purposes of destruction). There is a 20% chance that the 5'x5' floor tile in front of a locked door is part of a pit trap (DC 20 Find/Disable Trap checks). Messing with the lock—perhaps the result of a failed Pick Lock check—causes the tile to drop away over a chute that empties into a pit 60' in depth. Despite the apparent clutter, Guise precisely recalls the location and position of every item in her tower. When she returns to her tower, she will be alerted to trespass by even the smallest item being out of place.

E – Quentin's Tower: Austere columnar supports and gleaming marble floors are ubiquitous in Quentin's tower. The grandiose magician has a fondness for classic architecture. Youthful attendants attired in chitons gleefully bustle to and fro at their house duties. Tasteful marble sculptures

and flowing chiffon draperies add to the elegant ambience. Quentin is also a bird lover and avid zoologist. Fanciful cages festoon every room, holding brilliantly-plumed birds from many worlds.

Guardians: The largest wild cats in the cosmos—lions, tigers, pumas, gatherons, and more—pad down the halls. The trained beasts prowl in pairs and work in concert with the cabal guards to defend the tower.

Big Cat: Init +2; Atk bite +6 melee (1d8+2) or claw +4 melee (1d6+2); AC 16; HD 5d8; hp 22; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP pounce (DC 15 Fort or Ref save, or automatically hit for double damage); SV Fort +5, Ref +8, Will +1; AL N.

Defenses: Quentin's tower is impervious to all forms of scrying and teleportation. Outside entrances are locked (DC 18 Pick Lock checks) and trapped (DC 18 Find/Disable Trap checks; 1d12+6 fire damage). Inside doors have a 25% chance of being similarly secured. Stairwell doors and windows also have an additional enchantment that Quentin can remotely trigger with a mental command: enchanted entrances become solid wall for 2d6 hours though it is merely a powerful illusion. The *detect invisible* spell can be used to locate enchanted doors and windows. These portals can be opened with the *knock* or *dispel magic* spells, or physically destroyed (60 hp) when located. Cabal guards who escape combat will send a raven to Quentin to alert him to the presence of intruders.

F – Io's Tower: The newest tower in Ciz belongs to the Metal Magician. Io has retrofitted the inside of an antique multi-stage rocket found on a dead world with the comforts of a deep space research station. The walls, floors, and doors are chromed and plastered with rectangles of blinking lights, glowing buttons, and stubby cylinders with glass covers.

Guardians: Metal orbs covered with glass eyes float down the corridors in groups of 2 to 5. The orbs are very agile flyers and can fire searing beams of red light in any direction. The orbs also are equipped with retractable prongs that are used to charge a target and latch on. Once attached, a drill bit rips into the target, ejecting the eviscerated blood and meat from a dorsal port. The drone's flesh-detecting sub-routines are poorly coded. Tricking the orbs into getting stuck on a shield or other target is not very difficult.

Kill Sphere: Init +2; Atk prongs +4 melee (1d4 and grappled) or laser +8 missile fire (1d8); AC 14; HD 5d8; hp 23; MV 0' or fly 50' (hover); Act 1d20; SP drill bit (1d12 damage on grappled target), immune to mind-altering spells; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +4; AL N.

Defenses: Generators maintain a magic disruption field on all decks. Scrying, summoning, and teleportation spell checks initiated from outside the tower suffer a -10 penalty. All spells cast inside the tower incur a -5 penalty. Unlocked doors (50% of inside doors) slide open automatically when approached. All other doors refuse to open without a *knock* spell or DC 25 Pick Lock check.

G – Mygah's Tower: Although the magician purports to be a summoner, anyone who gains access to Mygah's tower discovers the trappings of a diabolist. Shrines of bones and profane works of art adorn every chamber. The ceilings and walls are covered in metal plates beaten with intricate interlocking patterns in an unbroken chain. Sigils circle the floor and delineate the boundaries between the rooms. Also of note, the entire tower is overrun with felines. They loll on the furnishings, skulk in the shadows, and hiss menacingly whenever approached.

Guardians: Mygah's darkest secret is that he does not control his destiny. He is a puppet under the control of his true master, Renos Tak. Mygah's early forays into diabolism brought him into contact with the powerful demon lord who promptly dominated the spellcaster. Renos Tak now wears the unassuming disguise of a white cat, with three milky-green eyes, that the other cabalists believe to be the magician's familiar. Mygah's tower is policed by an army of demons from his native plane, disguised as common house cats.

Minor Nekofiend (type II demon, Renos Tak): Init +3; Atk claw +8 melee (1d6 plus paralysis) or bite +6 melee (1d12 plus poison); AC 15; HD 5d12; hp 32; MV 40'; Act 2d20; SP paralysis (DC 14 Fort save or paralyzed 1d3 rounds), poison (1d3 temporary Strength damage), crit on 19-20, polymorph into cat, ESP, infravision, *darkness* (+8 spell check), immune to non-magical weapons, half damage from fire, acid, cold, electricity, and gas; SV Fort +4, Ref +10, Will +6; AL C.

Defenses: Mygah's tower is impervious to all forms of summoning and teleportation. All entrances and thresholds in Mygah's lair are sealed by invisible barriers. Passing through any doorway requires a *dispel magic* or *knock* spell. Alternatively, casting *detect invisible* upon a thief allows a DC 15 Pick Lock check to be made to open a door.

H – Zaffir's Tower: Visitors to Zaffir's tower immediately remark upon the damp earthy air and floral undertones. The Zilbonian is a celebrated horticulturist and every floor of his tower is brimming with plants from various planets, which the androgyne considers to be visiting guests. Floating magic lanterns on each level recreate the light of a different type of sun.

Guardians: The visiting flora are extremely protective of their gracious host's property. They attempt to kill or incapacitate any uninvited guests that traverse more than one floor without being accompanied by Zaffir. Attacking plants will be spread out and mixed among the other vegetation, which offers some camouflage. Roll 1d10 on Table F: Fearsome Flora to determine the type and combine the results with the generic "plant protector" stats below.



Table F: Fearsome Flora

1d10	Fearsome Flora
1	2d4 jawed plants
2	1d4 dream bush (SP lotus cloud up to 30x10x30: DC 15 Fort save or sleep 1d4 hours)
3	1d6 singing vine (SP 20' reach; siren song: DC 15 Will save or dominated)
4	1d6 grabber (Act 2d20; SP +5 grab: opposed Fort or Ref save, grabbed target is immobilized and automatically hit)
5	1d6 sword bush (Atk sword-leaf +10 melee (1d10))
6	1d3 stink fern (SP stench cloud up to 20x10x20, anyone in cloud takes 1d4 damage)
7	1d4 dart weed (Atk dart +8 missile fire (1d6 plus poison); SP paralysis poison: DC 15 Fort save or paralyzed 1d6 hours)
8	1 20'x20' patch of vampire grass (touch damage absorbed as hit points)
9	1 death cactus (Atk needle +6 missile fire (1d8 plus poison); SP death poison: DC 15 Fort save or 1d6 damage, 2d6 damage on 2nd failed save, and so on until save)
10	Roll two more times.



Plant Protector: Init +2; Atk touch +6 melee (1d6) or throwing thorns +6 missile fire (1d6); AC 15; HD 4d6; hp 14; MV 0'; Act 1d20; SP camouflage (+2 AC against missile attacks); SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +8; AL L.

Defenses: Zaffir's tower is impervious to all forms of teleportation. Zaffir is quite fluent in the psychic language of flora. Whenever a plant is slain, there is a 10% chance that the magician will hear the creature's psychic death scream, alerting the Zilbonian to the presence of intruders in his tower and their identities. Zaffir never locks his doors.

I - Rhauche's Tower: Rhauche's world is covered in bogs and fens. The magician has partially recreated the environment in his tower. Stone fountains gurgle with green water slick with algal bloom. Steaming brass pots keep the air heavy with humidity. The doorways are all framed with natural cypress. Among the rustic décor, Rhauche has placed outrageously expensive furnishings he believes benefit his station: divans upholstered with exotic animal hides, priceless vases on pedestals, and bric-a-brac inexplicably limned with gold leaf.

Guardians: In addition to the cabal guard, Rhauche's tower is protected by the magician's elite halfling guards. The shifty protectors always work in pairs and are bedecked in supple black leather armor that allows them to cling to the shadows unnoticed.

Halfling Guard: Init +2; Atk dual machetes +5 melee (1d6); AC 14; HD 5d6; hp 18; MV 20'; Act 1d20+1d14; SP two-weapon fighting, +10 sneak and hide, lucky (1d6+2 Luck points per day); SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +3; AL N.

Defenses: Zaffir's tower is impervious to all forms of scrying. Intruders will find all the doors on the first two floors explored are protected by mundane locks (DC 15 Pick Lock

check). All other doors are protected by powerful magical traps which cannot be opened without a key. The halfling guards hold two keys each, a red and a blue key. The blue keys open the magic doors, but are hidden within secret pockets in their armor. The red keys hang prominently from their belt loops. The halflings will readily give up a red key in exchange for their lives or will throw it down as they flee. Inserting a red key into the magically trapped doors causes 3d6 lightning damage to whoever is touching the key (DC 20 Fort save for half damage). Forcing the doors open also triggers the trap. Though difficult, the doors can also be opened without a key with successful Find Trap and Disable Trap checks, each at DC 20, followed by a DC 15 Pick Lock check.

J - Vacant Tower: This tower is owned by the Star Cabal, but has been unoccupied for over a year. The windows are shuttered and rooms are mostly empty.

Guardians: The cabal guard does not patrol this tower often. Psionic alien squatters from Rallos VII have gained access and taken up residence on the lower floors. Glowing halos that cycle through all the colors of the rainbow float over their bald heads. The squatters have mental attacks and a limited form of precognition which has allowed them to avoid the infrequent patrols by cabal guards. The squatters are all wanted by the Briggers, but are safe from apprehension while within the tower. They will fight to the death to prevent eviction.

Psionic Squatters: Init +3; Atk laser dagger +8 melee (1d4 plus 1d3 heat damage) or mind spike +8 missile fire (2d6, 100'); AC 21; HD 5d10; hp 28; MV 30'; Act 1d20; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +10; AL N.

Defenses: All external points of ingress into the tower have been sealed with a powerful ward (DC 25 Pick Lock check). However, a careful inspection reveals a lower window has been compromised.

CHALLENGE THREE



The final challenge is to perform a great quest in service to the Star Cabal. The judge should feel free to invent an original task inspired by the character's actions, run another published adventure, or use the scenario presented below:

The adventurers are summoned to council chambers and given the important task of locating the lost *Baton of Perpetual Light*. Reynard had the item, but he has been missing for several weeks. His last known location was the nearby moonlet, Gimel. The party can requisition equipment, mounts, and provisions as well as swap spells (such as *locate object*) at the athanaeum. A breadcrumb trail of clues leads across the planetoids to a demon prince's prison on moonlet Zayin.

Centuries ago, Zuuman of the Star Cabal defeated the demon prince Rattaxus in the orbit of Romulac. The magician imprisoned the demon in a lightless quasiplace called "The Black." The missing artifact has now fallen into the hands of Rattaxus who uses its power to amass a great army.

By now, the players should have postulated one or more theories about Reynard's character and whereabouts (refer to Schrödinger's Plot Device). If a plausible explanation for the *Baton of Continual Light* has not emerged at the game table, choose one of the following scenarios that best matches the events thus far:

- Reynard believes the Star Cabal has become too corrupt to be entrusted with the *Baton of Continual Light*. He attempted to seal the artifact within The Black to hide it, but was captured by Rattaxus. The demon prince is torturing Reynard, hoping to compel the magician to free him from his prison.
- A traitorous magician murdered Reynard and made a foul pact with Rattaxus. In exchange for the baton, the demon prince will be freed on the occasion of the 1000th Wizards' Conclave. The demon prince and the magician together will kill the other cabalist and destroy the Grand Ward at the center of the universe. The Old Gods will return and chaos will rule supreme.
- Reynard himself is the traitor, dabbling in forbidden diabolic magic. The magician travelled to The Black in an attempt to dominate the demon prince with a powerful binding spell. The overconfident magician failed and lost his magic artifact in the attempt. Reynard now hides in the alien section of the city, recovering from spellburn before attempting to retrieve the baton. The haughty mage refuses to be seen by the other cabalists without his magic artifact.

SPACE TRAVEL

Planet Romulac has fourteen distinct rings. The innermost ring, comprised of shattered moons, extends fifty kilometers into the gas giant's stratosphere. While the gas giant's surface is unable to support life, the inner ring has a thin, breathable atmosphere. Natural satellites from the size of boulders to moonlets march in a slow orbit, verdant with lush vegetation.

The larger moonlets have their own gravity, roughly half as strong as Aereth's. Characters can hurl boulders and make bounding leaps like superheroes. While traveling between planetoids, care must be given to remain attached to one's mount. A dismounted adventurer will continue in a straight trajectory until crashing into a planetoid, being slingshot by a moonlet's gravity into inhospitable space, or dragged into Romulac's gravitational well.

The larger planetoids have been named and mapped. The Star Cabal supplies a rough map indicating the key locations, including marking Reynard's last known whereabouts, Gimel. At each planetoid and when travelling between them, roll on Table O: Orbital Encounters. The moonlets' planet-facing sides are dark, dimly illuminated by violet light reflecting off Romulac.

Aleph: An uninhabited cluster of red space crystal.

Beth: Long grasses, wild flowers, and rolling hills. A spotting scope on a tripod is trained on Waw.

Daleth: Tropical plants and sweet-smelling flowers choke the planetoid. Walking through the jungles, one can hear the singing of sentient flowers.

Gimel: Dense trees and a lake swimming with mermites. An abandoned campsite is located in a glade. Reynard's journal was left behind. The last entry is dated 2 weeks ago. Reynard was going to survey planetoid Beth the next day.

He: Marshlands and croaking amphibians. Crates of liquor are hidden in a covered pit on the dark side, and unlikely to be discovered without a map from Rhauche.

Waw: Empty mesas lord over vistas of thick tanglebrush. There are no signs of recent habitation, but the menacing moonlet Zayin is visible with the naked eye. The huge rune can be plainly seen.

Zayin: This asteroid is lifeless. A large symbol carved in the rock can be deciphered with a *read magic* spell from orbit. It reads, "danger." The dark side of the asteroid holds the monolithic portal to Rattaxus' prison plane. See "The Obelisk" section.

Table O: Orbital Encounters

1d20	Encounter Details
1-8	No significant event.
9-10	Thin, orange-hued creatures with pumpkin-sized heads prowl the planetary rings seeking plunder. The pirates attack from floating skiffs propelled by oars, or have them moored nearby. The pirates' cloak ability allows them to create a 15' sphere of invisibility that they use to close distance with their victims. For treasure, roll on Table T-4: Loot. Void pirates (2d4): Init +2; Atk pike +8 melee (1d6) or crossbow +6 missile fire (1d6+2); AC 15; HD 2d8; hp 9; MV 25'; Act 1d20; SP cloak (1/day); SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +2; AL C.
11-12	Cosmic debris showers from a parallel trajectory. The meteoroids pummel the party for 1d6 rounds. Roll initiative or proceed in order. Each initiative turn, there is a 25% chance of being struck for 1d10 damage. Characters should describe what preventative actions they are taking, such as hiding beneath a shield or casting a spell. The referee should make a judgment call whether the action mitigates or avoids damage without rolling checks. At the end of each round, mounts and vehicles automatically take damage unless they are protected.
13-14	A band of rival initiates attacks. Use the stats from the first entry of Table C: City Street Encounters. For treasure, roll on Table T-4: Loot.
15-16	A neotenic, furry creature with gliding wings, a ringed tail, and large eyes lands on a random character. The creature bonds to the character and functions as a guardian familiar (DCC RPG, pg. 316) except when slain, the creature is gone forever.
17-18	A derelict skiff is locked in orbit around a nearby planetoid or has crashed near the party. For treasure, roll on Table T-4: Loot.
19-20	Eyeless, reptilian creatures called terrordactyls use expansive skin wings to glide from moonlet to moonlet in search of food. The terrordactyls work in teams using a frightful roaring display that causes fear, allowing them to herd their prey. Terrordactyls are the favorite food of giant space worms. There is a 25% chance in the second round of combat that a giant worm with razor-sharp teeth bursts from the ground and attacks the nearest group of creatures. After it swallows at least one creature, it retreats. Swallowed creatures take 1d12 damage every round until freed. In space, replace the worms with ethereal eels (fly 50'). Terrordactyl (2d6): Init +2; Atk bite +6 melee (1d8+2); AC 16; HD 6d6; hp 21; MV 10' or fly 50'; Act 1d20; SP fear (DC 15 Will save or flee 1 round); SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2; AL C. Giant Space Worm: Init -2; Atk giant maw +4 melee (1d12+2 to all targets in 10'x10' area and swallowed whole); AC 20; HD 8d12; hp 52; MV 0'; Act 1d20; SP swallow whole; SV Fort +8, Ref -3, Will -5; AL N.

THE OBELISK

An obelisk within a labyrinth marks the entrance to Rattaxus' plane. When discovered, read the following text:

In the violaceous gloom, you see a circular clearing with a 12'-tall pallasite obelisk at the center, its large olivine crystals locked in a metalline matrix. A single, 1'-wide footpath cobbled in polished obsidian pebbles snakes around within the circle's boundary leading from the obelisk to a point at the circle's edge. The labyrinth is no more than 20' in diameter. A 2'x4' inscribed metal cylinder stands next to the labyrinth's entrance. An empty wine skin lies on the ground nearby.

The pathway leading to the obelisk is a labyrinth meant to confuse Rattaxus and the demons trapped within. The metal cylinder is a spinning ritual wheel. The inscription reads, "Spin me nonuple with the clock. Speak the name to let down my lock." A word in strange letters is inscribed below the riddle, and beneath that a signature: "Zuuman the Magician, 2973 BC." Each time the wheel is spun clockwise the metal cylinder rings like a bell.

The strange letters can be deciphered with a DC 25 Read Languages check, or *comprehend languages/read magic* spells, or by communing with Zuuman's brain in Ciz's mausoleum. Speaking the name aloud after spinning the wheel clockwise nine times causes the letters to glow and the wind to howl. A shadowy archway appears at the maze's entrance leading to "The Black," a quasiplane designed to jail the demon prince Rattaxus.

The Black exists in a lightless parallel dimension with twisted properties. Within the dimension, space is multiplied. The labyrinth and obelisk exist in the same positions, but twentyfold larger in size. Beyond the portal, the pathway is made from obsidian flagstones and become 20' wide with 20' gaps between walkways. The obelisk grows over 200' in height. Slipping off the pathway causes an endless fall into a bottomless pit. The ravenous darkness in The Black feeds on any light sources. For example, a torch gives off a light in a diminished 5' radius (75% reduction). The dearth of light reduces the distance of infravision to 10'.



ZAYIN

HE

CTZ

WAW

ALEPH

ROM

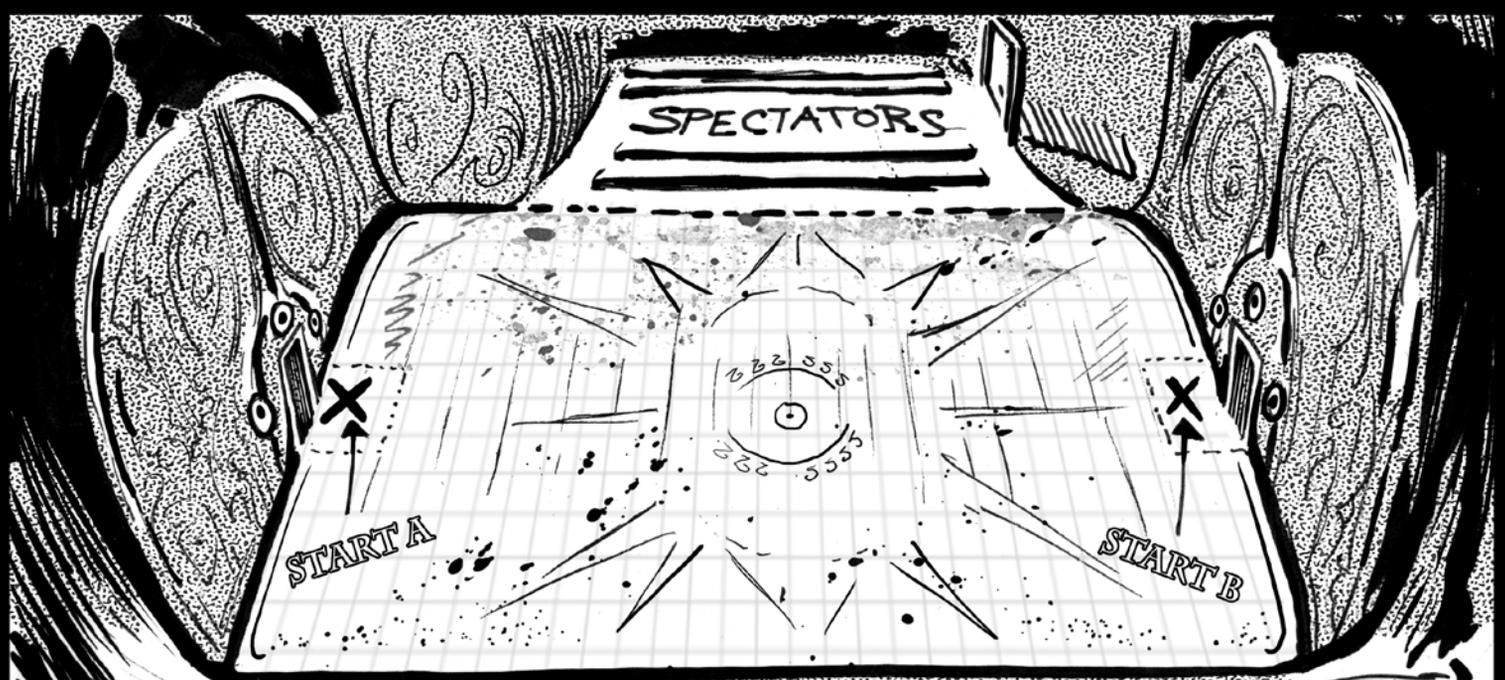


GIMEL

DALETH

BETH

ULAC



SPELLDUEL CHAMBER

REGION



ANTECHAMBER



DETAILS OF MAZE ARE UNIMPORTANT FOR THIS ENCOUNTER



Light invariably attracts soulstingers, the winged insectodemons that infest this realm—even light generated by spell manifestations. The albino demons hover with moldering moth wings and latch onto their prey with life-draining prehensile tails tipped with a slavering fang. Each time a light source is created, 2d4 soulstingers swoop to attack. If the PCs extinguish all light sources, there is still a 1 in 10 chance of stumbling into denizens of The Black every 2 turns (1d3 soulstingers with a 50% chance of being accompanied by a single type 1d3 demon with an albino, insect-like appearance).

The time it takes to reach the obelisk varies greatly. Walking the entirety of the path and feeling along the edge of the path without light is probably the safest route although it is also the slowest (at least 3 hours). The expanded labyrinth follows the same path as its counterpart in the Primary Plane. Adventurers can reach the obelisk faster by traversing the 20' gaps between walkways with a fly spell, ropes, or other clever solution. Don't forget to roll for random encounters every 20 minutes during these exploits.

Soulstinger (type III demon, Rattaxus): Init +3; Atk bite +10 melee (1d8 plus 1d4 against lawful creatures) or sting +8 melee (1d6+1 plus 1d4 XP drain, then suffocate); AC 16; HD 8d8; hp 36; MV 20' or fly 40'; Act 2d20; SP suffocate (DC 20 Fort save or choke for 1d6 Stamina damage per round), demon traits; SV Fort +8, Ref +12, Will +6; AL C.

At the end of the path, an enormous metal bar secures a 15' tall runed archway set in the obelisk. When the PCs open the door, read or paraphrase the following:

Dim light radiates in all directions as the massive portal creaks open. A 12' tall demonic giant in long black robes stands before a magnificent shining rod, gleefully shaping a foul moth-like creature from handfuls of light. The creature suddenly flies to the ceiling, which you now see crawls with even more hideous abominations.

Rattaxus clutches the *Baton of Perpetual Light* in his greedy claws, hoping to once again amass a great demonic army. The demon prince gives the party a sly look before pointing a single clawed finger at them, signaling his minions to

attack. The demon prince may stay his attack long enough to parlay with the party:

Banishment: Banishing the demon prince is nearly impossible (DC 35 *turn unholy* check) primarily since he is already soulbound to this quasiplace. Successful turning causes Rattaxus to disappear in a puff of brimstone, leaving the baton, but reappearing on the labyrinth path to block the party's exit.

Bargain: Rattaxus refuses to trade the artifact for any price, though may be open to other proposals such as trading the baton for his freedom.

Battle: If all else fails, the adventurers will have to square off against the demon prince. Three soulstingers fight in the battle at any one time. If a soulstinger is slain, a fresh one joins the fray in the next round.

If a party member is reduced to zero hit points, Rattaxus threatens to swallow a fallen character's soul unless the others lay down their weapons. The demon either holds the character hostage or places a *geas* on the party. He instructs them to return to the Star Cabal's council chambers with a purple gemstone and crush it underfoot, which will open a portal to The Black. The demon prince will then be freed of his prison and will lead his army through the portal to take revenge on the Star Cabal.

Rattaxus (type IV demon prince): Init +6; Atk claw +18 melee (4d10+8); AC 19; HD 14d12; hp 91; MV 40'; Act 2d24; SP immune to fire, spells (+8 spell check: *charm person, choking cloud, detect good, dispel magic, lightning bolt*), crit on 20-24, demon traits; SV Fort +13, Ref +5, Will +10; AL C.

The *Baton of Perpetual Light* is a rod imbued with the energy of a star's core. The baton has several uses. First, it can be used to make super ley lines visible for hundreds of kilometers around which allows the wielder to determine the convergence point prior to the Wizards' Conclave. Secondly, the baton can be used as an endless energy source for ritualized magic. The item adds a +6 bonus to ritualized magic checks. The item can also be used to restore the Grand Ward, though the entire store of the rod's power must be expended. A handy tool indeed.

CONCLUSION



nce the adventurers have regained the *Baton of Perpetual Light*, they need only return to the Grand Palace to take their place amongst the cabal. With a voting seat, the new member will play a role in determining the group's future. A few loose ends still need to be tied up:

The 998th Wizards' Conclave: The Conclave should occur shortly after the new member becomes a full member of the Star Cabal. If any skullduggery occurred during the adventure, the Conclave might not go as expected. Perhaps the adventurers accepted the Star Cabal's invitation to complete a personal quest with the aid of a conclave ritual.

Reynard: Was the Reynard story line adequately concluded?

If Reynard is indeed dead or doesn't return, the magicians will demand that Fantax allow his possessions to be divided among them and a new cabalist recruited.

Residence Tower: Full members of the cabal may claim the right of residence and demand a tower of residence. The characters can outfit their tower as they see fit.

Duties: This adventure can serve as launching point for a larger space-based campaign or the story arc may return to the adventurer's home planet. In any case, the Star Cabal will expect periodic council attendance and mandatory participation in the Wizard's Conclave events, especially as the all-important 1000th Conclave draws near.

APPENDIX A:

ADVANCED SPELL DUELS



There is no greater test of eldritch might than spell combat. The clash of spellcasters is at once terrifying and exhilarating to behold. The slightest miscalculation could crush every creature in the vicinity beneath the weight of raw arcane and divine energies, especially when high-level magic-users are locked in mortal combat.

This section contains clarifications and enhancements for the Spell Duel rules in the core rulebook (DCC RPG, pg. 98). Usage of these rules is entirely optional. As always, common sense should be used to judge spell counters. Never discount a player's creative application of a spell effect as a counter just because it's not in the list.

Declaration: The counterspell must be declared before spellchecks are made. Each caster must be given equal opportunity to spellburn (if applicable). Luck may be used before or after the spellcheck rolls are made.

Momentum Modifier: The *momentum modifier* is the difference between the caster's momentum tracker and the enemy with the highest momentum. The momentum modifier should be added or subtracted to all spell checks for the duration of the spell duel.

Duration: A counterspell cannot have a longer casting time than the spell it is countering. For example, a spell that takes a round to cast cannot counter a spell that takes one action to cast.

Conservancy of Actions: The normal spell duel rules state that a caster loses their normal initiative action after counterspelling. This becomes impractical at higher levels when characters gain multiple action dice. Therefore, any unused actions are retained for use during a counterspeller's normal initiative turn.

Special Initiative: At the end of a combat round in which a spell duel occurs, spell duel participants may choose to reroll their initiative. The new initiative is determined by rolling 1d20, adding the character's initiative modifier, then adding the momentum modifier. Players can wait to see the result of other combatants' "special initiative" rolls before deciding to invoke the rule.

Spells that Counter: The expanded list of spells and counter spells below highlights the fact that clerics can be just as effective in a spell duel as the wizard or elf. This is not an exhaustive list.

Opposed Spells That Can Be Used to Counter Each Other

Shielding spells (*magic shield, holy sanctuary, whirling doom, control fire, control ice*): Any physical attack spell

Summoning spells (*animal summoning, invisible companion, monster summoning, demon summoning, vermin blight*): Any

summoning spell, *binding*, or *banish*

Fire resistance, resist cold or heat: *Fireball, scorching ray, righteous fire, control fire*

Invoke patron: *Invoke patron* (depending on patrons), *divine aid* (opposed roll)

Any attack spell: Same attack spell (for example, *fireball* counters *fireball*)

Opposite and reverse spells: *invisibility/see invisible, paralysis/cure paralysis, enlarge/reduce*, etc.

Mentalism spells (*charm person, forget, transference, mind purge, scare, word of command, lotus stare*): Any spell

Dispel magic: Any spell

Advanced Counterspelling in Action: When a counterspell is declared, follow these steps.

1. At the start of the spell duel, each player with a counterspelling caster places a d10 or larger die in front of the character sheet with the number 1 facing up. This is the momentum tracker.
2. The attacker declares the spell to be cast and makes a spell check augmented by the momentum modifier.
3. The defender (counterspeller) declares the counterspell to be cast and makes a spell check augmented by the momentum modifier.
4. The high roller is the winner. Increment the winner's momentum tracker by 1.
5. Cross-reference the two spell checks on table 4-5: Spell Duel Check Comparison (DCC RPG, pg. 100).
6. Roll the indicated die and compare to table 4-6: Counterspell Power (DCC RPG, pg. 101). If the attacker has the higher spell check, use the "Attacker High" column; otherwise, use the "Defender High" column. If the two spell checks are identical, a phlogiston disturbance occurs. Roll 1d10 on table 4-7: Phlogiston Disturbance (DCC RPG, pg. 103). This is the most dangerous arena of magic where different effects become comingled and extraordinary things may happen.
7. Resolve any spell effects at the resulting spell checks.
8. Proceed back to normal initiative. Other character classes receive their normal actions. On the counterspeller's initiative, the character may use any remaining actions.
9. At the end of the combat round, any spell duel participant may re-roll "special initiative" if desired. The character is moved into the new initiative order immediately.



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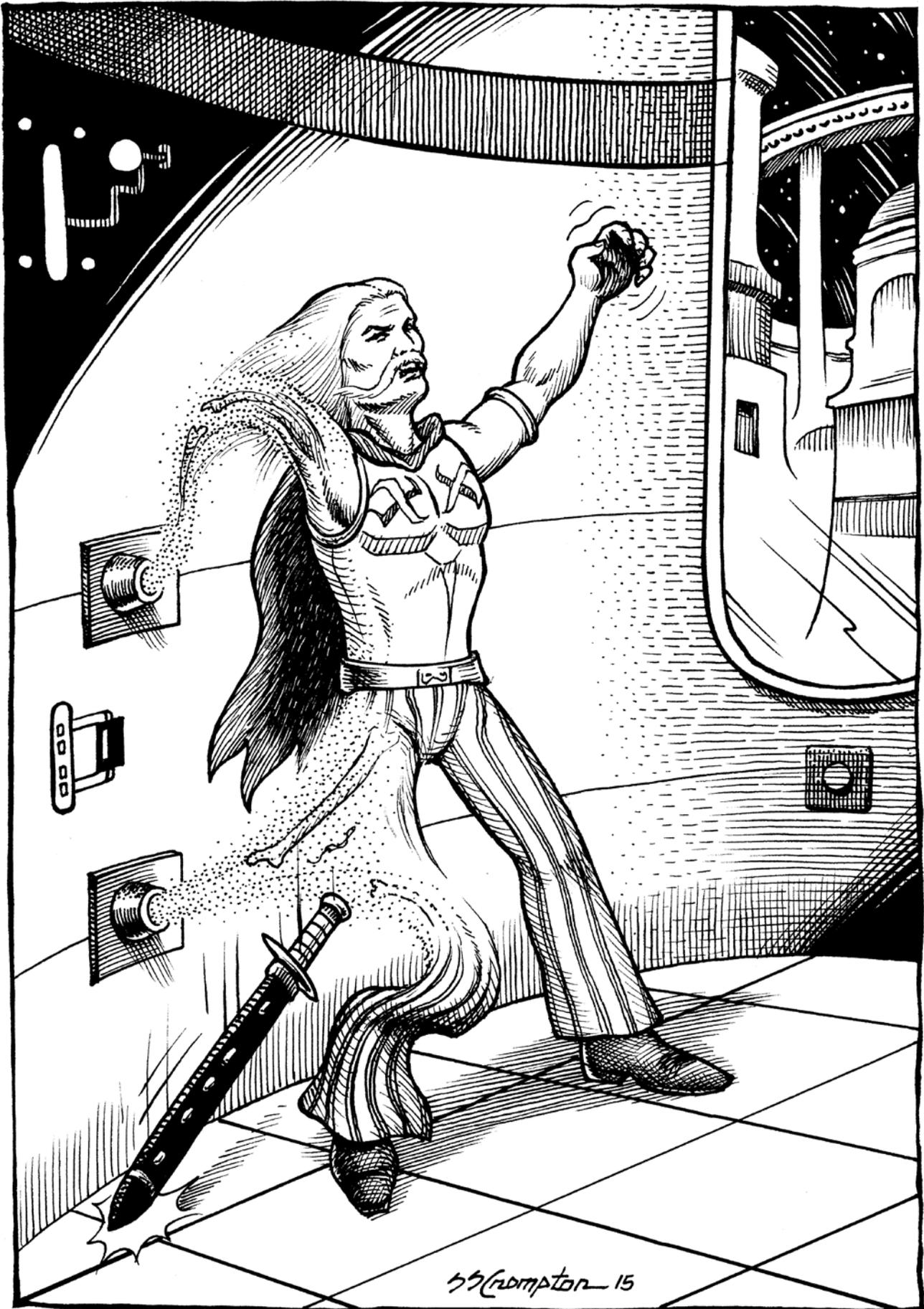
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