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2nd Edition

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SPELLJAMMER™

Official Game Accessory



Practical Planetology
by Nigel Findley



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by Nigel D. Findley

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INTRODUCTION

Captain Trevis Pelor stood on the bridge of his Squidship, the *Far Star*, gazing at the planet below him. From space, the vast majority of earth-worlds looked the same: white-swirled blue marbles. It was impossible to tell them apart, really. From up here, the only features visible were the cloud patterns, and of course they changed. Sometimes he could see through gaps in the clouds, make out a section of coastline here, an arc of a bay there. But it was almost never enough to recognize the shape of a land mass.

Trevis remembered his first trip into space, and his surprise that his own planet didn't look like the globe that had taken pride of place in his old teacher's study. That globe had shown all the land masses and seas in detail. His first view of his home world had been just like this: a wondrous blue-white work of art, showing none of the details of what lay below the clouds.

Certainly, Trevis had met travellers who'd claimed to be able to pick out the shape of continents and oceans from the subtle distortions they caused in the clouds that passed above them. But he himself didn't have that skill and – if the truth be known – he considered such claims to be foundationless boasts.

What all this meant was that he had to trust the star charts that his navigator used – trust them implicitly. Looking at a world from this distance, there was no way based on vision alone to tell if the planet was, say, Falx or Toril, Gaia or Oerth. Luckily, however, the charts had always proved correct – so far.

There was another consequence, of course. In the case of an unexplored world, or one that wasn't included in the great book, the *Geonomicon*, that he kept in his cabin, there was no way of knowing what the world was actually like under its shrouding of clouds.

The *Geonomicon*, what a great work that was! A collection of details on almost four score worlds. Of course, four score was merely a drop in the ocean compared to the number of planetary bodies in the universe. For every world described

in the book, there were probably thousands that weren't included. That was why every copy of the *Geonomicon* he'd ever seen had dozens of blank pages bound into it before the back cover – so each captain could write down information about the worlds he or she had explored that weren't included in the concordance. So far, Trevis had expanded his own copy with the addition of twelve worlds. Soon to be thirteen...

The world below him wasn't in the *Geonomicon*; to his knowledge, it had never been visited by any ship – until now. Once more, he'd have the chance to write down knowledge that, possibly, had never been acquired before. When he eventually returned to his home, or to another world with a major spelljamming civilization, he'd have his own additions transcribed to a master version of the *Geonomicon*, to be included in all future copies of the great book. And he'd have his own name added to the list of contributors – all the great explorers of the void – on the fly leaf.

But that was for the future. Now it was time to investigate the globe that hung before him!

"Take us down," Captain Trevis Pelor ordered.

Welcome back to the SPELLJAMMER™ universe! *Practical Planetology* is an accessory for the AD&D® SPELLJAMMER™ game system. It provides the DM with ready-made planets for use when the players are exploring the cosmos. These can be dropped into adventures when the PCs have decided to visit a new world that the DM hasn't had time to fully detail. Alternatively, any of these worlds can form the basis for a fully-developed SPELLJAMMER™ adventure.

The planets described herein run the gamut from earth bodies – more or less like our own planet, but usually with one or two twists – through fire, water and air bodies, right the way through to "exotic" locales like diskworlds and torus-worlds. The majority of them have some twist or quirk that makes them unique.

The Geonomicon

The **Geonomicon** is a large book containing details on 80 or so worlds that have been explored by various adventurers. Copies of the book are rare, and extremely costly: 20,000 gp would be a minimum price for this work. DMs can introduce the **Geonomicon**—or perhaps excerpts from it—into their own campaigns as a way to stimulate players into visiting

and adventuring on worlds other than Oerth, Toril and Krynn. Entries in the **Geonomicon** will generally mirror the entries in *Practical Planetology*. Of course, DMs are encouraged to include some misrepresentations or out-and-out lies in the information they pass on to their layers, just so the PCs don't know everything and so they'll have some surprises in store.

INTRODUCTION



Each section contains the following basic information:

Overall Data: Size, temperature, atmosphere, gravity, length of day, etc. If appropriate, this includes a map on the fold-out mapsheet, usually using what's known as the "Eckert Equal Area Projection" (for cartophiles). Such maps aren't usually relevant in the case of air worlds, water worlds or fire worlds.

Continents: An overview of the major land masses, including geophysical data where appropriate, such as volcanic or tectonic activity.

Life Forms: A brief discussion of the native flora and fauna.

Guide to the Groundlings: A more detailed discussion of the most developed species on the planet, including attitude to and knowledge of spelljamming.

Other Issues: Specific details unique to the world in question, including gravity on a torus world, weather patterns on a ring planet, navigation on/in a cluster world, and so forth

Adventure Hooks: These are short "story starters" from which DMs can build detailed adventures.

Each world is named, but other details – such as the crystal sphere containing the world and its orbital position around its primary – are not included. This is so that individual DMs can place the worlds wherever they see fit. For example, a DM has designed a planetary system with an earth body – detailed, because that's where the DM expects the major adventure to take place – and a fire

world. Unexpectedly, the players decide to explore the fire world. The DM can then flip to this book's chapter on fire worlds, pick an appropriate one, and thus have important information ready instantly.

Practical Planetology can also be used as an idea sourcebook. DMs can read through the entire book for adventure ideas, or to stimulate their imaginations when they have to create worlds of their own.

Conventions

The majority of the material presented here is potentially available, in one form or another, to PCs in the SPELLJAMMER™ universe. Those sections which deal specifically with rule-related issues are contained in brackets [like this].

Except where the form of the planet requires it, no mention is made of the length of a planet's year. This is, of course, dependent on the distance of the planet from its primary. Including such information would restrict the usefulness of this product (as, for example, when a DM needs a planet a long way from its primary – and hence with an extremely long year – and the only appropriate planet in this book has a very short year). Lengths of seasons depend on the length of the year, and hence are not given either.

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Introduction

While earth worlds are by no means the most common planets in Wildspace – that distinction would have to fall to air worlds – they are the ones most familiar to, and most visited by, adventurers. In general, earth worlds are like our own planet: spheres of rock, with more or less complex internal structures. The vast majority have atmospheres, while many also have hydrospheres (oceans or seas). Surface conditions vary wildly, as do the number and types of life forms native to the worlds. The overwhelming majority of these worlds have earth-normal gravity, regardless of their size – why this is true is a mystery – although some few have gravity fields much stronger or much weaker than the norm.

For comparison purposes, worlds such as Toril, Oerth and Krynn – and that mythical world, Earth – are classified as “standard” planets. In the descriptions that follow, worlds are frequently described as standard or non-standard in certain characteristics. For instance, the world Comporellon has a crust that is much thinner than standard. Context will always make clear which characteristics are being referred to.

Comporellon Overall Data

Comporellon is a Size E spherical world. Its diameter at the equator is approximately 7,900 miles, giving it an equatorial circumference of 24,820 miles. It is considerably flattened at the poles (polar circumference of 21,500 miles), giving it more the shape of a tangerine orange than a sphere. The planet rotates faster than standard, making its day length 14 hours, rather than the standard 24.

Comporellon’s composition is similar to that of Toril, Krynn and Oerth. It has a core of liquid metal, predominantly iron, surrounded by a mantle of molten rock, and finally a crust of solid rock. Compared to the standard worlds, its crust is surprisingly thin: on average, little more than two miles. In many places, the crust is considerably less than a mile thick. In consequence, the planet is highly active volcanically and tectonically.

It is a rugged world with many mountain ranges (as a result of its significant tectonic activity). For the last several centuries, the planet has been in a mountain-building cycle, which means that its topography is changing at a measurable rate. In various places, mountain ranges are rising from the plains, or from the seabeds, at rates that can be measured in tens of feet per year. Almost three-quarters of Comporellon mountains – and virtually 100% of the large ones – are volcanic to one degree or another. Most mountains are topped by plumes of black smoke and gouts of fire.

On other worlds, the majority of erosion is carried out by water. On Comporellon, that task often falls to molten

lava. In the high mountain ranges, the larger peaks are often the source of great rivers of lava that gouge out massive valleys on their way to the oceans. Visitors have described “waterfalls”, almost a mile high, of liquid fire. Inevitably, however, when others have arrived to confirm these claims, the topography has changed and the waterfalls of lava are gone.

Although the majority of Comporellon’s surface is land, there are several oceans of warm salt water. The temperature of these oceans is kept relatively high – around 55° F worldwide – by volcanic action. Underwater geysers and lava vents heat the depths, while lava flows from the land pour energy into the coastal shallows. Visitors tell wondrous tales of the sheets of steam that surround the mouths of lava “rivers,” where the molten rock causes the ocean to flash instantaneously into steam. Salt content of the oceans is generally high.

There are smaller bodies of fresh water, particularly on the lowlands away from the volcanic mountain ranges.

Climate and Weather

The rotational axis of Comporellon is almost perfectly perpendicular to the planet’s orbital plane – in other words, the axial tilt is very small. This means that there is little difference between summer and winter. In fact, the differences between the seasons are so minor that only people very knowledgeable in the ways of the weather can distinguish them.

Throughout the year, Comporellon is almost totally covered by clouds. These are mainly water vapor, but also contain contaminants – largely sulfur and its compounds – that are spewed out in great quantity by the volcanoes. The clouds are often mottled brown or red in color, and appear to be very thick. In fact, however, the cloud layer is relatively thin, which allows some diffuse light from the sun – if not much heat – to penetrate to the lands below. The undersides of the clouds are often lit by the reflected glare of hundreds of volcanoes, so there is very little difference in illumination between day and night.

The cloud cover is very consistent. The underside of the cloud layer is at an average of 15,000 feet above sea level, and is rarely more than 1,000 feet thick. Some of the world’s tallest mountains extend into, or even through, the cloud cover, but none of these huge peaks is volcanic.

The clouds reflect much of the heat from the sun, but, conversely, they retain much of the heat released by volcanoes, which on other planets would be radiated into space. Thus, Comporellon is considerably warmer than might be expected. There is little temperature fluctuation between the poles and the equator. Much greater is the temperature difference that comes with altitude. At sea level, the average planetary temperature of Comporellon is 90° F. This climbs steadily with increasing altitude. At the underside of the cloud layer, the temperature is generally around 130° F. Above the clouds, temperature drops

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rapidly with increasing altitude, as it does on most other planets. The seasonal temperature variation is about 5° between summer and winter.

Rain is very common on Comporellon, as water vapor from the oceans condenses in the cloud layer and falls again to earth. Because the mountains are generally sources of heat, rainfall is more plentiful over the lowlands. Rain on Comporellon is warm and brackish, and tastes noticeably of sulfur.

Because heated air rises, there are strong winds in the mountainous regions, blowing consistently and powerfully uphill. These winds are definitely strong enough to pose serious risks to spelljamming vessels in the atmosphere, but are rarely accompanied by precipitation. [To determine wind conditions on Comporellon, use the Weather Conditions table on the inside cover gatefold. Year-round, use the Spring/Fall column. In the vicinity of mountain ranges, add +4 to the dice roll.]

Appearance from Space

Comporellon appears as a yellow-brown sphere because of its almost total cloud cover. The cloud-tops show very little detail.

Continents

There are three major land masses on Comporellon, and a number of islands. Two of the major land masses – named Zilber and Veraine by the natives – are in the southern hemisphere. The third – Panaga – is a huge “super-continent” which fills most of the northern hemisphere.

Due to the high level of tectonic activity on Comporellon, these continents “drift” at considerable speed (geologically speaking, of course). Zilber and Veraine are approaching each other at a rate of about four miles per year, while Panaga is moving southward at the same rate. Unless conditions change, the three continents will collide in about 200 years, which should trigger an increase in the rate of mountain-building.

Lava erodes rock much faster than does water. Since most erosion on Comporellon is a result of lava flows, this means that the geography changes at a rate hundreds of times faster than on other worlds. Detailed maps are often out of date before they’re widely distributed, and even maps dealing with whole continents sometimes become somewhat unreliable within a few decades.

Life Forms

The first recorded explorer to visit Comporellon described the planet as a “close approximation of the Hells.” He didn’t stay around long, mainly because he expected that such a hostile environment couldn’t support life – or anything else of interest, for that matter. He was wrong, of course.

Comporellon might be hostile, but it still supports a wide

array of life, both flora and fauna. Comporellon plants are very different from those on most standard worlds. Because very little sunlight penetrates the cloud layer, few native plants depend totally on photosynthesis for their energy. Those that do are bright blue or violet in color.

The majority draw their energy from differences in temperature – either between the surface and deep below the ground, or between different spots on the surface. For example, a certain classification of plants grows a root system which extends hundreds of feet into the ground, where the rock and soil is hotter. Another classification grows long sprouts or “runners” – often up to a mile long – towards lava rivers. In both cases, the plants use the temperature difference between parts of their structure to synthesize food to power their metabolism.

The animal life on Comporellon is very interesting: it comprises almost exclusively reptilian creatures like those from earlier epochs on the standard planets. These reptiles can be found in virtually every size and description, filling almost every ecological niche on land, sea or air, and little work has been done in categorizing them. [In other words, the DM should feel free to populate Comporellon with all the interesting dinosaurs he likes. Dinosaur statistics, besides those found in the AD&D® *Monstrous Compendium* volume 3, can be drawn from the 1st Edition *Monster Manual* and *Monster Manual II*, and converted to 2nd Edition terms, or can be created from scratch.]

Guide to the Groundlings

The most intelligent race on Comporellon – and, apparently, the only non-reptilian one – is a species of hairless humanoids called the Ai’ir (ay-EER). The word “humanoid” is used here to refer to appearance; in truth, however, there is little doubt but that the Ai’ir are actually humans.

The Ai’ir are characteristically tall and thin, with skin that is almost snow-white. Presumably both characteristics have evolved to minimize heat build-up from the atmosphere. Since little ultraviolet penetrates the cloud layer, skin pigmentation isn’t needed to prevent burning and other damage. The Ai’ir are totally hairless, and their eyes seem slightly larger than normal. Otherwise, they could quite easily be mistaken for natives of virtually any other human world.

Culturally, the Ai’ir are nomadic – necessary, since Comporellon’s volcanic activity makes it downright unhealthy to stay in one place too long. They generally depend on a hunting-and-gathering lifestyle. There is no evidence that they have discovered agriculture or animal husbandry; perhaps, of course, they’ve just decided that these ways aren’t for them. The common organization is a band comprising up to a dozen families. In general, bands stay well away from each other, and neither compete nor cooperate on a regular basis. Occasionally, unusual circumstances arise which drive these normally peaceful

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people into major conflicts, however. There is evidence that three times in the past two hundred years, various alliances of bands made war on other such alliances. The cause of these wars isn't something obvious like territory or rivalry over resources. What little evidence exists points to distinctions between the religious beliefs of various groups – and very subtle distinctions at that – as the major motive. For example, there are indications that the last major religious war was fought between a group who envisioned the dominant deity of Comporellon as having long hair, and a group who pictured her as being bald. This evidence was reported by a group of thri-kreen – a race well-known for their own strange religious conflicts – and so should, perhaps, be taken with the proverbial grain of salt.

The various bands of the Ai'ir share a single native language, a degenerate form of the common tongue. Many sages take this as proof that the Ai'ir are actually all that's left of a colony established by another world. They have no written language, but their oral tradition is extensive. There are many epic myths, including some that speak of “the days when men came from the skies” (giving the colony hypothesis even more support).

Apparently, the Ai'ir have no knowledge of the form of magic wielded by wizards, and there are no mages among their population. They do have priests, however, who profess belief in a bewildering array of deities. Judging from the stories of the few explorers to visit Comporellon, there are at least some 75 deities worshipped on the planet, perhaps many more. Some philosophers doubt that so many deities could coexist within a single crystal shell; whether or not all the deities exist, Ai'ir priests certainly have the ability to cast spells. [Ai'ir priests usually concentrate on the spheres of Combat, Creation, Elemental, Healing, Protection and Weather. The vast majority are of levels 1-6 (1d6), but there are some exceptional individuals who progress to 12th level, and stories tell of (perhaps mythical) figures who could only be of level 18 or higher.] Priests are highly respected members of their bands, but rarely become band leader. The position of power is usually held by the woman who shows the best combination of skills at oratory and oral history.

The Ai'ir have no conception of the greater universe that surrounds their world. Their degenerate language has no words for space, planet, star, or related concepts. (This is obviously because Comporellon's cloud cover is too thick to allow them to see anything beyond the atmosphere.) The light and warmth of the sun is diffused significantly by the atmosphere and clouds, so there is no single source in the sky for this radiation. The Ai'ir know that greater levels of light and heat come from a certain region of the sky, and that this region moves, but they apparently have no conception that this is caused by an outside agency. Instead, they think that a certain region of the cloud cover itself glows. If the Ai'ir climbed a ray of the mountains that penetrate the cloud deck, they might get a better idea of

the universe in which they live. As it is, however, these mountains are considered to be the “homes of the gods,” and hence totally forbidden.

Taboos are incredibly important among the Ai'ir, and these proscriptions vary from band to band. In some bands, taboos include such things as touching the band chief or the priest, speaking to an unmarried female, eating meat at a band gathering, not eating meat at a band gathering, and many other (sometimes contradictory) proscriptions. In general, the punishment for breaking a taboo is death.

The Ai'ir know absolutely nothing of spelljamming. The reception that visitors get on arrival on Comporellon depends greatly on just which band they happen to encounter and how they comport themselves. Some bands are relatively open when it comes to strangers, while others are xenophobic in the extreme. Tales tell of visitors being accepted as gods, while others describe immediate attacks by the Ai'ir and attempts to totally eradicate the “outlanders.”

The best way to earn the enmity of an Ai'ir band is to ridicule their religious beliefs.

Other Issues

The many volcanos on Comporellon pour large quantities of caustic substances into the atmosphere. Luckily for surface life, most of these are concentrated in the cloud layer. The level of acidity within these clouds, however, must be experienced to be believed.

For each turn that a spelljamming vessel spends within the cloud cover, the ship must survive a saving throw against acid. A failed throw means that the ship suffers 1 point of hull damage from the acid. Luckily for the crew of such a ship, the atmosphere envelope prevents the acid from affecting anyone below decks. Any crewman actually on the deck of the ship – working the rigging, for example – must save vs. spells or suffer 1d4 points of damage from the acid. This saving throw is made each turn that the ship remains within the cloud cover. For this reason, visitors to Comporellon are best advised to get through the clouds as quickly as possible.

Rain is generally acidic as well, but nowhere near as strongly as the clouds themselves. Rainfall causes mild irritation to exposed skin, and discolors metals, but causes no damage or other significant effects.

Adventure Hooks

- The PCs' ship puts down on Comporellon, possibly for repairs. The crew quickly finds that the region where they have landed is volcanically unstable, and soon will be inundated in a lava flow. They must get themselves away before this happens... and must decide whether or not (and how) to rescue the band of Ai'ir that is also threatened by this instability.
- One PC is “recognized” by the local Ai'ir band as a god or

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goddess. Obviously, the Ai'ir will be unwilling to let their deity just up and leave – particularly after the band's priest has learned that he can manipulate the "god" to his own personal advantage. The other PCs must find a way to rescue their "divine" companion.

- The PCs make friends with a local Ai'ir band. They then discover that a coalition of other bands will soon arrive to obliterate "their" band over some religious difference of opinion. What are the PCs to do about this?
- While approaching the planet's surface, the PCs' ship is attacked by a large flock of pterodactyls or other flying dinosaurs. The ship must then "dogfight" with these flying predators, while trying to stay out of the acidic cloud layer.

Falx

Overall Data

Falx is a size F spherical world. Its diameter at the equator is about 20,000 miles, giving it an equatorial circumference of approximately 62,830 miles – about 2 1/2 times that of Toril. It shows no polar flattening, and so is almost perfectly spherical. The planet rotates slightly slower than standard, giving it a day of 30 hours.

The composition of Falx is similar to that of the standard worlds, except that its crust is considerably thicker – leading to much less volcanic activity – and that its core is very much smaller than the standard. The fact that its nickel-iron core is smaller and cooler than standard means that Falx has no magnetic field to speak of. Thus magnetic compasses – including lodestones – don't work.

The planet's axis is inclined at an angle of 10° to the plane of its orbit. This means that Falx has seasons.

Geologically, Falx has been "dead" for a very long time. Consequently there are no newly-formed – and hence rugged – mountain ranges. If there once were mighty mountains, they've been weathered down over the millennia to smooth, rolling hills. The maximum range in land altitude – from the highest hilltop to the deepest basin – is only 8,000 feet or so. There are no volcanos, earthquakes, hot springs, or other signs of volcanic activity.

Because of its high temperature, there is no liquid water on the surface of Falx. There are indications, however, that this wasn't always the case: dry river beds and ocean basins, for example. Today the only liquid water is in underground lakes and seas. These bodies of water fill caves and channels that, during a more volcanically active geological epoch, were once filled with lava and magma.

Climate and Weather

Falx is permanently shrouded by a thick layer of cloud. Although this cloud cover reflects a greater proportion of incident sunlight than does the cloud cover of standard worlds, Falx is not the cold world that this fact might imply. In fact, the atmosphere contains a relatively high proportion

of carbon dioxide (CO₂), which has led to a runaway greenhouse effect. The average surface temperature of the planet is 150° F. At the poles, this drops to a more manageable 100°, while at the equator the temperature climbs to 165°. Because most of this heat is a result of the greenhouse effect, there is no noticeable difference between daytime and night time temperatures. Seasonal variation in temperature is almost negligible as well. Temperature drops steadily with increasing altitude, until it reaches 80° at the lower margin of the cloud deck.

The cloud cover is unbroken between about 20,000 feet of altitude and 40,000 feet. The temperature within the cloud cover is low enough to allow for occasional rain. However, this rain never reaches the ground, even at the poles; instead, it re-evaporates before it gets within a few thousand feet of the surface.

Winds can be extremely strong on Falx, often achieving speeds in excess of 200 mph. [To determine the weather conditions on Falx, use the standard Weather Conditions table on the inside cover, but roll 2d10 instead of 2d6, and consider all results of 13 or more as "hurricane."] The underside of the cloud deck is often lit by the strobe-flashes of massive lightning storms.

Falx's thick cloud cover absorbs most of the light of the sun. During the day, the average level of illumination is like that of starlight on a standard world. At night, the blackness is stygian, broken only by the flash of lightning. The clouds absorb more of the red end of the spectrum, so the light at the surface is bluish-green, giving an unmistakable sense of being underwater.

The high proportion of CO₂ in the atmosphere inhibits non-magical fire. It is considerably more difficult to light a fire. Once lit, the fire gives off much less light and heat. [Decrease range of illumination and damage inflicted by 1/2, rounding all fractions up.] These restrictions do not apply to magical fire (e.g., *fireballs*, dragon fire, etc.).

Appearance from Space

Falx appears as an almost featureless sphere of white. Only the most extreme weather systems are visible, as textured swirls in the otherwise undifferentiated cloud cover.

Continents

Since there is no liquid water on the surface of Falx, the whole planet must be considered a single continent. This was not always the case, of course.

There are three large but shallow basins that could only be the sole reminders of vanished oceans. All three of these basins are almost perfectly circular. Certain sages take this as evidence that Falx was at one time struck by gigantic meteorites. Perhaps it was these massive impacts that altered the climate and caused the extinction of most forms of life on the surface.

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Life Forms

Falx has two totally different – and almost completely independent – ecosystems. One exists on the surface of the planet; the other dwells in caverns and tunnels that honeycomb the upper crust.

Surface Ecosystem

Life on the surface is very difficult, due to both the high temperature and powerful winds. In general, surface life falls into two quite different categories: small creatures that can shelter from the winds, or massive creatures powerful enough to withstand their assault.

Plant life on the surface is limited to mobile colony-type organisms similar to earth-style mosses. These organisms form huge carpets over the landscape, often hundreds of feet across. In texture they resemble finely-woven rugs, and their color is usually a profusion of reds and oranges. Although there are many different species of such organisms, the differences among them are very small and matter only to sages (and, presumably, to the mosses themselves). They are generally clumped together under the category of “carpet mosses.”

Animal life is exclusively reptilian. Falx is home to a profusion of small lizard-like creatures – typically four-legged, although six- and eight-legged varieties have been reported – typically between one foot and three feet in length. They are all very low to the ground. Most are omnivorous scavengers, feeding on the carpet mosses and on each other. Most have some kind of poison or venom to protect themselves against other lizards and larger predators; the method for delivering this poison varies, while its lethality – extremely high – doesn't. A typical example of this type of life – the imbul – is discussed in the Appendix.

At the other end of the size scale from the lizards are the larger denizens on Falx's surface. Rather than depending on their low profile and ability to shelter to protect them from the vicious winds, these creatures trust to their strength and resilience to keep them alive. There are few of these large species, which is probably just as well. The most populous is indistinguishable from the tarrasque (cf. *Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC -3; MV 9, Rush 15; HD 300 hp (approx. 70 HD); THAC0 5; #AT 6; Dmg 1-12/1-12/2-24/5-50/1-10/1-10; SA “sharpness” bite, terror; AL N). While the true tarrasque is reputed to be unique, there are several hundred of these enormous monsters spread over the surface of Falx. (Some sages claim that this world is the home of the tarrasque, and that the unique creature is actually a single specimen transported through space for some reason. Other sages point out that there might be subtle differences between the Falx tarrasques and the terrestrial version. Space is large, after all, and the similarity might be just coincidence.)

Subterranean Ecosystem

During a more geologically active epoch, the crust of Falx was networked with lava tubes and caverns. Now that the lava has receded, this bewildering interconnection of passageways is available for habitation. As mentioned before, the only liquid water on Falx can be found as subterranean rivers, lakes and oceans in these passageways.

Many normally subterranean creatures make their homes beneath the surface of Falx. Most populous are the mind flayers, or illithids. Two huge illithid cities – each spreading for miles in three dimensions through interconnected passageways – have been reported, and there are doubtless smaller mind flayer outposts elsewhere beneath the surface.

There are also known to be populations of orcs and goblins, although these species are much less numerous than the illithids. It seems very likely that the illithids use these lesser races as slaves and for food.

Other intelligent races are matters of legend, although the sheer number of these legends gives them some credence. There is said to be a small contingent of dwarves who were marooned on Falx when their spelljamming citadel was attacked and damaged by a celestial dragon. Likewise, legends tell of a growing population of drow elves, also marooned and unable – or unwilling – to leave. Some explorers report that Falx is home to a relatively large population of myconids (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 10; MV 9; HD 1-6; THAC0 varies; #AT 1; Dmg 1d4 x HD; SA spore clouds; SD poisonous skin; AL LN), who use the caverns and tunnels to cultivate great crops of baneful molds, slimes and jellies. Most disturbing of all are the tales that claim some of Falx's subterranean lakes are populated by the foul race of aboleths (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 4; MV 3 Sw 18; HD 8; THAC0 12; #AT 4; Dmg 1-6 (x4); SA special; SD slime; AL LE).

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The dominant race on – or beneath – Falx is undoubtedly the mind flayers, or illithids. These hideous creatures are growing more and more populous, and their cities and outposts are spreading at a disturbing rate. Unless the other intelligent races beneath the surface cooperate in opposing the mind flayers – an unlikely occurrence at best: how frequently do dwarves cooperate with orcs, or drow with goblins? – it seems likely that soon enough the entire subterranean region will be controlled by the illithids. The sole exception will be the regions occupied by the aboleths. It seems that there is a firm alliance between the mind flayers and the aboleths. In return for guarantees that the aboleths' territory will remain sacrosanct, and promises of more territory later, the aboleths have been passing on to the illithids some of their great stock of unholy knowledge.

The major consequence of this is that some few illithids

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have managed to learn how to cast wizard spells. Luckily, these individuals are very rare: 1 in 1,000 as an absolute upper limit. Most are unable to advance beyond 6th level, although some extremely rare individuals have achieved 10th or even 12th level. (Needless to say, these high-level illithid mages are the rulers of the two mind flayer cities.) Spell selection is relatively limited, since their only source of spells is from drow or other unfortunate spellcasters they manage to capture. Illithid mages are still able to use the mental powers possessed by all mind flayers.

The two illithid cities are literally half a world away from each other: one is beneath Falx's north pole, the other beneath the south. Since illithids are telepathic, the cities have no names as such. Instead, they have mental "labels" which, when translated into the common tongue, can be expressed as Brain-in-the-Skull (the northern city) and Tentacles-Grip-Tightly.

Brain-in-the-Skull is the older and larger of the two cities. In size, it's staggering: its population exceeds two million illithids! Its elder-brain is so well-developed that its telepathic range is in excess of 10 miles – unheard of anywhere else in the universe. Tentacles-Grip-Tightly is smaller and younger, with a population still to reach one million. While Brain-in-the-Skull has size and tradition going for it, Tentacles-Grip-Tightly seems to be more dynamic and active.

There is apparently no rivalry between the two cities. Instead, they cooperate in all things. Both cities continue to establish armed outposts, expanding the territory they control, and the cities cooperate in maintaining these garrisons. At the present time, the illithids seem to be building up for a major offensive against the dwarves. Although the drow are the more dangerous enemy, and should theoretically be dealt with first, the illithids seem to consider the continued existence of the dwarves a personal insult, to be remedied with all speed.

Illithids can occasionally be found on the surface of Falx, but only when the winds aren't blowing too strongly. These sorties above ground are seem merely to be to satisfy the creatures' curiosity.

Apparently the illithids are well aware of the concepts involved in building and flying spelljamming vessels. They simply have no interest in exploring the rest of the universe, however. The total conquest of Falx seems to be enough of a task for the next few decades. After that, however, who can say?

The large elder-brains in the two cities, and the smaller elder-brains in the illithid outposts, are constantly scanning the skies of Falx for inbound spelljamming vessels. The illithids are very interested in – and quite concerned about – vessels arriving from elsewhere, since they might be bringing either reinforcements for the beleaguered races the illithids are trying to exterminate, or yet another faction that might unsettle matters even more. For this reason, as soon as an inbound spelljamming vessel is detected – that is,

when it passes within the telepathic radius of an elder-brain – the illithids take whatever action is necessary to drive the ship away or destroy it. This will usually involve at least one illithid using *astral projection* to view – and if possible attack – the ship's crew from the Astral plane. If the elder-brain considers it warranted, small armies of mind flayers can *levitate* up to a hovering ship and attack it.

Although these illithids have little interest in spelljamming for themselves, the same can't be said about the aboleths. There are frightening rumors that, as part of their non-aggression pact, the illithids are building ships and helms (of some kind) for the aboleths. The thought of aboleths rampaging around the universe in ships of their own is simply too horrible to contemplate.

Other Issues

The concentration of CO₂ in Falx's atmosphere is so high that it causes humans and demihumans to tire faster than normal. If the DM uses rules to simulate fatigue and exhaustion, all characters should find that they become exhausted after approximately half the normal time. Alternatively, DMs can simulate this problem by multiplying all encumbrance values for gear and loot by 1 1/2. Travel on or below Falx should be difficult and tiring. (These restrictions do not apply to creatures native to Falx, of course, since they have adapted to conditions over the generations.)

Adventure Hooks

- While trying to land on Falx, the PCs' ship is forced down and damaged by a sudden storm. The PCs must deal with the dangerous surface life while trying to repair their ship.
- While exploring the surface, the PCs are approached by a small group of dwarves. The illithids are about to overwhelm a dwarvish garrison, the dwarves tell them. Will the PCs help?
- While exploring the surface, one or more PCs are captured by illithids for interrogation and worse. The other PCs must stage a daring rescue. As the PCs' vessel flies low over the planet, an assault group of illithids levitates up from the surface to attack.
- The rumor about the illithids supplying the aboleths with spelljamming ships is true! And the PCs are "lucky" enough to be the first group to encounter spacefaring aboleths...
- For reasons of their own (perhaps because of religious prophecies or something similar), a group of myconids has taken something valuable from the PCs' spelljamming vessel while it was lightly guarded. (Any sentries were immobilized with pacifier spores.) The PCs must now deal with the myconids – one way or another – to retrieve their valuable item.

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Armistice Overall Data

Armistice is a massive Size F world, almost perfectly spherical. Its diameter is about 30,000 miles, giving it an equatorial circumference of about 94,250 miles. Armistice rotates relatively slowly; its day is 60 hours long. The planet's axis is inclined to its orbital plane, so Armistice does have seasons.

The planet has three moons: Vesta, Lacerne and Vardig. All three are Size E, making them worlds in their own rights. They orbit relatively close to the planet, which means they appear in the skies as huge disks on which it's easy to make out numerous impact craters. The three moons are reputed to be Voidworlds, without atmospheres, although there is no trustworthy record of this.

The proximity of the three massive moons has a more important effect than enlivening the night sky of Armistice. Tidal forces are exceptionally strong, and – since there are three moons involved, each with its own orbital period – hard to predict. Armistice's frigid seas show an average tidal variation of 50 feet, while in narrow bays or inlets this can increase to 100 feet. Tidally-generated currents are often as fast as 25 knots, making surface navigation a very risky business indeed.

Tides affect more than the oceans, of course. The constant tidal pushing and pulling keeps the molten core of Armistice heated to a very high level. This leads to a high level of volcanic activity, which has caused one of the more poetic explorers to describe Armistice as “a planet of fire and ice.”

When the three moons are perfectly aligned – which occurs every 28 (local) days – the planet is racked by devastating earthquakes. The alignment lasts for 10 hours. [In each hour, there is a 5% chance that a particular locale will be hit by an earthquake. The effect is identical to that of an *earthquake* spell cast at the 25th level of ability.]

Unlike the vast majority of earth worlds, Armistice does not have earth-normal gravity. In fact, its gravitational field is three times as strong as that of the standard planets. The consequences of this are discussed in the section “Other Comments”.

Armistice is a rugged world, with numerous large mountain ranges. Most of these ranges have at least one large active volcano. When the three moons are aligned, all active volcanos on the planet erupt simultaneously. Volcanic eruptions usually just involve smoke and flame; any lava flows are generally small, and limited to the upper slopes of the volcano itself. Apart from the mountains, the rest of the planet is generally flat. There are few valleys or foothills; the mountains seem to rise straight out of the plains.

Most of Armistice's land area is cloaked year-round in ice and snow. Only the upper reaches of the active volcanos are free of snow, because of the internal heat. The oceans

are frigid, and it's only the constant motions of the tides that keep them free of ice. There are many fresh-water lakes, but all of these are covered in a thick layer of ice.

Climate and Weather

Armistice is an unpleasant, frigid planet. At the equator, summer temperatures range from 35° F during the day, down to 0° at night; in the winter, the range is from a high of 5° F down to a low of -10°. At the poles, average temperature ranges are 0° to -35° in the summer and as low as -30° down to -60° in the winter. These temperatures do not include wind chill. Precipitation – which, on Armistice, means snow – is common. [Snow occurs on a 5 in 6 chance in spring and fall, and a 4 in 6 chance in summer and winter.]

Wind, like the cold, is another unpleasant fact of life on Armistice. There are virtually no days when the wind isn't blowing at least somewhat, and powerful blizzards are the rule rather than the exception. [Use the Weather Conditions table on the inside cover, but add 2 to the dice roll.] The wind whips the oceans into waves which, due to the higher gravity, travel about three times faster than do their earthly counterparts.

Even when snow is falling, cloud cover on Armistice is rarely total, and the sun often shines through to the snowy surface. Its heating effect is minimal, however.

Appearance from Space

Armistice is a study in white-on-white. The clouds are generally bright, pure white, while the snow-covered surface is a dirty white, sometimes even showing as pale grey. The cloud formations are similar to those of Earth, meaning the planet appears as a streaked sphere.

Continents

There are three major and two minor continental land masses on Armistice. The former are named Ugrek, Taliak and Grishnakh, the latter Toborg and Rakhar. Geologically speaking, Toborg was once a part of Ugrek, and Rakhar was once a part of Grishnakh. Despite the relatively high level of volcanic activity, continental drift on Armistice is very slow.

There is a narrow “land bridge” that connects Taliak and Grishnakh. Most of the time it is well underwater, however. The land bridge is only clear of water when the alignment of the three moons takes place in exactly the correct orientation to Armistice. This happens once every 25 Armistice years, and lasts for several days. During this time, the land bridge is inevitably shaken by many earthquakes, making the passage from one continent to the other a decidedly dangerous undertaking.

Legends on Armistice tell that there was once a fourth major continent, between Ugrek and Grishnakh. This land

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mass is said to have sunken beneath the waves several centuries before (hence the name of the Landlost Ocean).

Life Forms

There are few animals or plants native to Armistice, and none can be classed as truly sentient. On the land, plants are generally limited to primitive lichens and mosses that grow on exposed rocks and mountainsides. Near the equator, large plants grow close to the ground, spreading out their flat leaves to catch as much of the sunlight as they can. In the ocean, there are several species of seaweeds similar to kelp. These weeds are highly toxic to life that didn't evolve on Armistice [save vs. poison or suffer 2d10 points of damage].

The most common land animals are very dangerous predators. There are at least two species very similar to remorhaz, and one that is virtually indistinguishable from the tunnel worm (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 4; MV 6; HD 9+3; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SA lunging; AL N). These prey on each other, on several species of primitive mammals [treat these as giant rats], and on anything else unfortunate enough to wander by. The frigid oceans are ruled by great fish very similar to the megalodon, or giant shark (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 5; MV Sw 18; HD 10-15; THAC0 11-5; #AT 1; Dmg 4-16, 5-20 or 6-24; SA swallows whole; AL N), although there are many smaller fish as well. There are no aquatic mammals or reptiles in the oceans of Armistice. There are rumors that aquatic versions of tunnel worms inhabit burrows in the ocean bottom – and that these monsters grow to twice the size of their terrestrial counterparts. It is absolutely certain that none of the species native to Armistice has developed sentience.

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Just because the native species have failed to achieve sentience doesn't mean that intelligence is completely lacking from Armistice. To understand this, it's necessary to review a little history.

Several centuries ago, the goblin races – orcs, goblins, kobolds, hobgoblins and ogres – had a considerable presence in space, and often launched raids against elven outposts and bases. This ended when the elves launched the Unhuman Wars, and came after the goblinoid races with everything they had.

In almost all cases, the goblin races fought as individual bands and tribes, never cooperating fully, and sometimes actively hindering each others' plans. For this reason, much of the Unhuman Wars was a full-fledged rout of the disorganized goblin "navy." In one certain sphere, however, a number of tribes and bands, including representatives of all the goblin races, did something completely unprecedented: they subordinated their own individual authority to one overall war leader, a half-orc named

Gralnakh Longtooth. Gralnakh proved to be a great leader, a brilliant strategist and a wily tactician. Under his command, the Combined Goblin Fleet managed to hand the Elven Imperial Fleet its first – and only – truly damaging losses.

The Combined Goblin Fleet was doomed from the first, however, and Gralnakh must have known it. As the other fleets of the goblin races were destroyed piecemeal, the elves were able to throw more and more of their forces against Gralnakh's beleaguered command. Even against massively escalating opposition, the Combined Goblin Fleet managed to fight on for years.

Eventually, the leader of the Elven Imperial Fleet – at that time an admiral and ex-battle poet Aldyn Leafbower – realized that this continued fighting was tying up a good portion of his fleet, which meant that enemies in other spheres could be building up for an attack on underdefended elven worlds. He couldn't let that happen, but neither did there seem any quick way to end the conflict. The system that the Combined Goblin Fleet had chosen as their battleground was filled with tiny worlds and moonlets, each of which could be used to hide many ships for either repair or ambush purposes. Using mighty magic, the Imperial Fleet had already reduced two of the worlds to rubble, but this hadn't inconvenienced the Combined Goblin Fleet at all. The only military option Leafbower had was to assault each of the myriad worldlets one at a time, in a space-going version of house-to-house fighting. That would take too much time.

So he chose a daring alternative. He arranged individual parlay with Gralnakh Longtooth, and offered an official cease-fire – an armistice. The half-orc knew his cause was lost, and that fighting on would only kill all his followers to no gain. Proving himself once again a great leader, he accepted the armistice, but – as a condition of the cease-fire – demanded that he and his people be given a world of their own, unmolested by elven interference. Leafbower decided this was a picayune price to pay for instant peace, so he accepted.

When he returned to his fleet, Leafbower's officers were outraged, and wanted to renege on the deal. Leafbower was a man of his word, however, and forced the Imperial Fleet's Council of Admirals to follow through with the bargain. Unfortunately, neither Gralnakh nor Leafbower had specified exactly what the planet must be like. In what many still consider to be a decision driven solely by spite, the Council of Admirals shipped Gralnakh and his followers to the most inhospitable place they could find. The elves named this cold, brutal world "Armistice."

In the centuries since the end of the Unhuman Wars, Gralnakh's few thousand followers have developed an extensive civilization, most of it in tunnels and caves laboriously excavated beneath the frigid surface of Armistice. When their leader eventually died, the individual tribes broke up and went their separate ways. For perhaps one hundred years there was peace among the different

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settlements. Then some tribes realized that digging new caverns was harder work than taking already-completed excavations from other tribes. Warfare broke out, and has raged ever since. Small alliances form and break up at the whims of tribal chiefs, and there is no indication that the bands will ever reunite under a single banner. And that's just how the elves want it. The Armistice goblinoids are even more brutal and warlike than their fellows on other worlds (if that's possible).

After many generations under the crushing gravity of Armistice, the goblinoids have adapted to the conditions. In appearance, they are much shorter and more stocky than their fellows on standard planets, looking like some kind of unholy cross between goblinoids and dwarves. If the Armistice goblinoids ever reached another planet, they would prove much stronger than other members of their races. [Armistice goblinoids suffer no penalty to movement or encumbrance due to high gravity. Under normal gravitation, an Armistice goblinoid would be considered to have STR 18, giving bonuses of +1 to hit and +2 to damage. They do not receive these bonuses on Armistice, of course.]

The Armistice goblinoids know that spelljamming technology exists, but have no helms nor any way to make them. They will see any approaching vessel as a possible way to escape their frigid prison, and so will do anything – even, perhaps, cooperate to some small degree – to possess the vessel's helm for themselves. Once the ship has been captured, however, great violence will ensue as individual tribes fight for the prize.

The Elven Imperial Fleet has made it clear to virtually every race in the universe that an attempt to sell spelljamming technology to the inhabitants of Armistice would be considered a declaration of war against the Imperial Fleet. So far nobody – not even the Arcane – has tried to break this prohibition. Although the deal between Gralnakh Longtooth and Aldyn Leafbower prohibits any elven presence on Armistice itself, there is always at least one elven Man-o'-War patrolling within the Armistice solar system. This ship will warn off any vessel approaching the planet. If the approaching ship disregards this warning, the Man-o'-War's orders are to destroy the encroaching vessel. (Remember, however, that a crystal shell is a big place, and the elven ship can be only one place at a time. It's quite possible that a ship could reach Armistice without being detected by the Man-o'-War... at least, for a time.)

Armistice plays a big part in the mythology of the goblin races elsewhere in the universe. There are many legends that claim a huge goblinoid fleet is gathering around Armistice, ready to sally forth and re-fight the Unhuman Wars – to a different outcome, this time. The elves seem to encourage these legends. They know that no such fleet exists, but think that belief in this great fleet placates the wills of other goblinoid tribes who might be thinking of fighting the elves themselves.

Other Comments

The high gravity of Armistice – three times that on standard worlds – has several significant consequences. Firstly, every object (or creature) weighs three times what it does on Toril or Oerth. Thus, the encumbrance value for every item is tripled on the surface of Armistice. So, for example, a warrior wearing chain mail and carrying a longsword, dagger and medium shield will find that his encumbrance value is 165 pounds, not the normal 55 pounds. Assuming that the warrior has STR 14, and checking the Modified Movement Rates table on page 78 of the *Player's Handbook*, 2nd Ed., we find that the poor fellow's movement rate on the surface of Armistice is 1. On a standard planet it would be 12. Obviously, encumbrance becomes a much more significant issue.

In higher gravity, objects – and people – fall faster, and so hit the ground harder. Falling damage on Armistice is 3d6 per 10 feet fallen, to a maximum of 40d6 (which represents terminal velocity).

Projectiles such as arrows and darts must also be considered as falling objects. While they're flying forward, they're also falling freely towards the ground (which explains why an arrow drops in flight). On Armistice, each range category for a missile weapon is divided by three (round fractions down). Thus for a light crossbow on Armistice, short range is 2, medium range is 4, and long range is 6. For a thrown dagger, short range is 0 (1/3, rounded down to 0), medium range is also 0, and long range is 1. What this means is that any target is always at long range when throwing a dagger on Armistice.

Within the gravity field of Armistice, all creatures that fly with wings have their movement rate cut in half, and their Maneuverability Class worsened by one step (e.g., from MC B to MC C). This does not affect creatures using magical flight, creatures native to the Elemental Plane of Air, etc.

Adventure Hooks

- Inadvertently, the PCs enter the sphere and are warned off by the Man-o'-War patrolling the Armistice system. (Most PCs worth their salt will take this as a personal challenge to find out just what the elves are hiding...)
- By blind luck, the PCs manage to avoid "Imperial involvement," and land on Armistice. An attack by a large predator damages the ship, and the PCs must find a source for the material they need for repairs. Unfortunately, this will probably mean contact with the goblinoids...
- Again, the PCs slip by the picket ship and land. The goblinoids have seen the ship approaching, and try to take her. The PCs might be able to play off one group against another, and thus avoid having to fight a whole world.
- The PCs land on Armistice. A single young goblinoid races to the ship, begging for "political asylum." It seems the youth has broken some major law – perhaps he wasn't sufficiently brutal or something – and his life is forfeit. He

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begs the PCs to take him away from this hell-hole. (Depending on how sly the DM is feeling, this goblinoid can be telling the truth, or this might be a cunning attempt to get spelljamming technology for his tribe or for himself.)

- Upon leaving Armistice, the PCs' vessel is immediately attacked by the elven Man-o'-War, and the PCs have to fight their way out of the system.

Radole

Overall Data

Radole is a Size E spherical world with a diameter of about 7,400 miles and an equatorial circumference of 23,250 miles. It is slightly oblate – that is, flattened a little at the poles – but not greatly so. Its axis is exactly perpendicular to the plane of its orbit.

Radole is virtually unique among inhabited worlds in that it is tidally locked with its primary. This means that it always keeps the same face towards its sun. The lock is perfect, and the planet doesn't shift or wobble even slightly. The "Sunside" of the world is in constant sunlight, while "Darkside" never sees the sun. There is a band around the world, running from pole to pole, where the sun is always half above the horizon and half below it. This ribbon of half-light is the only portion of the planet that is inhabitable by humaniform life. It is this that leads many to call Radole a "ribbon-world."

Radole has no moons. Its atmosphere is standard, easily breathable by normal life-forms – at least along the habitable ribbon. Conditions elsewhere are discussed in later sections.

The planet is rugged, with high mountains and deep valleys on both Sunside and Darkside. The Ribbon itself is characterized more by rolling hills and fertile plains. There are no large oceans of liquid water anywhere on the planet. On Sunside, the temperature is so high they've been boiled away; on Darkside, they've frozen solid, and over the millennia much of the ice has "sublimed" (evaporated, without going through the liquid phase). The Ribbon has numerous fresh-water lakes.

The last mountain-forming epoch ended several million years ago, probably before complete tidal lock occurred. Geologically and volcanically, Radole is now a dead world. There are no volcanos or earthquakes.

Climate and Weather

Because of its tidally locked condition, Radole has three distinct climatic regions.

Sunside

On Sunside, the average temperature is well above the boiling point of water. On the equator at the point where the sun is directly overhead, the temperature hovers around 620° F, dropping off drastically towards the habitable band.

This temperature is high enough to melt tin, lead and other soft metals. Explorers who've managed to protect themselves against the killing heat have described a blast-furnace environment, with lakes of liquid tin, and slowly-moving mountains of half-molten lead. There are no clouds, and no precipitation of any kind on Sunside. Dry winds of superheated air whip over the surface. [These winds are always "strong winds" with regard to landing/takeoff times and tactical movement modifiers.]

Darkside

The exact opposite conditions exist on Darkside, where sunlight never falls. At the point on the equator furthest away from the sun, the temperature stays around -310° F. This is cold enough to liquify the oxygen in the atmosphere. Thus, even without worrying about the killing cold, the air of Darkside isn't breathable by normal lifeforms. This brutally low temperature increases rapidly as one moves towards the Ribbon, of course.

Darkside sports lakes of liquid oxygen. Cloud cover is always total, with the clouds consisting of ice and oxygen crystals. Precipitation is frequent [2 chances in 6 per day], and consists of oxygen rain or snow. Winds are exceedingly brutal, whipping up the land's covering of oxygen snow into massive blizzards. [These winds are always "gales" with regard to landing/takeoff times and tactical movement modifiers.]

The Ribbon

In the 200-mile-wide habitable region, conditions are absolutely perfect for humaniform life. The temperature is always roughly constant, hovering around 75° F with a variance of only about 5°. Warm, dry air spills over from Sunside, and clear, fresh water runs down from the mountains that separate the Ribbon from Darkside. Winds are always moderate and very pleasant. [To determine wind conditions, use the "spring/fall" column of the Typical Weather Conditions table on the inside cover, but roll 1d6+1, rather than 2d6. Precipitation – light, warm rain – occurs on a 1 in 6 chance.]

A famed elven poet-explorer named Aldyn Leafbower once described the Ribbon thusly: "Between Sunside and Darkside, the Ribbon is a continuous garden swimming in the eternal morning of an eternal June."

Appearance from Space

Sunside is totally free of clouds, and so appears reddish-grey from space. Few features can be discerned from orbit. Darkside is, by definition, dark, so it's difficult to make out its appearance. Other sources of light, or other forms of vision, might be able to detect an unbroken cover of dirty-white clouds. Cloud cover over the Ribbon is broken, and appears much like Earth's.

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Continents

Since there are no oceans on Radole, the whole planet can be said to be one huge continent. Lakes exist – molten metal on Sunside, liquid oxygen on Darkside, and water on the Ribbon – but these are too small to break the single land mass into continents.

Life Forms

As with climate, the planet is divided into three distinct regions, each with its own ecosystem.

Sunside

The high temperatures on Sunside make it instant death for most normal forms of life. There are, however, bizarre creatures who seem well adapted to the conditions. The majority of Sunside life is roughly insectile. Huge beetles with reflectant shells – seemingly made of metal – crawl slowly over the crust. Since there seems to be nothing smaller for them to eat, sages assume that they must prey only on each other, or perhaps extract the nourishment they need directly from the crust. Energy is not a problem, since they can presumably use the incredible solar flux falling on their upper surfaces. [One form of beetle, the steelback, is discussed in the Appendix.]

There are larger creatures as well. Stout-hearted explorers have reported seeing great metallic dragons soaring on the thermals over mountains of half-molten lead. Some sages claim that these massive beasts can't be related to the dragons found on other worlds, since the heat would prove as lethal to these creatures as it would to humans. Other sages refute this, however, claiming that – given time to adapt – virtually any fire-using dragon could adapt to and thrive in conditions on Sunside. Recurring rumors describe at least one species of dragon that is unique to Radole, however: the mithril dragon (described in the Appendix).

Darkside

Life is much more limited here, since energy is in such short supply. There are reputed to be great white worms, similar in characteristics to common purple worms, that burrow through the crust. There are also reports of shadowy, somewhat humanoid shapes that wander the dark plains, but these have been disregarded as fantasy. [In fact, these creatures are shadows, as described in the *Monstrous Compendium*. There is, at the coldest point on Radole, a *gate* to the Negative Material Plane, and it's through this that the shadows reach the planet. So far none have tried to cross the mountains into the Ribbon – presumably because night never falls on the Ribbon, and this frightens them off.] The only life that has been confirmed to exist on Darkside is a sub-species of white pudding.

The Ribbon

All lifeforms on the Ribbon are members of familiar terrestrial species. There are humans, elves, dwarves and a smattering of halflings, while orcs, goblinoids and other potentially baneful sentients are conspicuous by their absence. Plant life is all according to the standard terrestrial model: grasses, grains, flowers, fruit trees, etc. Again, there are no baneful growths present.

There are many domestic animals such as cows, sheep and horses, plus a great profusion of harmless creatures like deer, birds, squirrels, even (reputedly) a few unicorns. The Ribbon seems totally free from any animal that poses a threat to human life.

Guide to the Groundlings History

Nobody knows the true history of Radole. The present inhabitants have records going back several thousand years – much longer than the life span of even the oldest still-living elf – but these records have nothing to say about how terrestrial life came to the Ribbon. Most sages agree that the Ribbon's present ecosystem could only have arisen through careful cultivation. In other words, somebody at one time brought all the life forms to Radole, and constructed a stable ecology. The big question is, *Who?*

This isn't the only puzzle posed by Radole. An even greater question concerns the history of the planet before the arrival of its demihuman inhabitants, because it cannot be denied that there was intelligent life on Radole long before the humans, elves and the rest appeared on the scene.

In its entirety, the geology and topography of the Ribbon has been *created* – manufactured. Ringing the planet around the boundary between the Ribbon and Darkside is a huge, unbroken mountain range, 15,000 feet high. Everyone who's studied it agrees: the range was *built* by someone or something. And this mountain range can have only one purpose: to hold back glaciers and to prevent frigid winds from making the Ribbon uninhabitable. There is no doubt that the mountains themselves, and the soft slopes of the foothills leading to them, are artifacts, created by an intelligence, on a scale orders of magnitude greater than anything seen elsewhere in the universe. Channels for rivers were also constructed in a regular pattern, exactly 10 1/4 miles apart. It's down these artificial channels that the Ribbon gets its fresh water.

Nobody knows just who created the mountains, but it's obvious that an almost god-like power was involved. In fact, the initial theory was that a deity or group of deities was responsible for the mountain chain. More recent research has refuted this, however.

In widely-scattered places along the world-girding range, huge smooth-walled tunnels lead for miles into the hearts of the mountains. These tunnels terminate in great caverns,

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thousands of feet across and hundreds of feet high. The walls of these caverns are decorated with abstract murals and carvings, and show a recurring motif of three-pointed stars and three-petaled flowers of alien form. Dwarven stonemasons have examined these tunnels and caverns, and have concluded that they weren't bored into the mountains; the mountains were built up around them. From this, it's an obvious conclusion that the makers of the caverns also built the mountains. And why would gods go to the trouble of creating the caverns and murals? What possible purpose could they serve? The conclusion most widely held on Radole now is that the mountains were constructed by a race that used to inhabit the planet, and that the great caverns are their equivalents of temples.

Nobody knows what form this ancient race took, or where its almost unimaginable power came from. None of the murals contains any representation of anything that could be a sentient being. Certain sages believe that the creatures who built the mountains had no physical form whatsoever, but this isn't a widely held opinion.

Legends and myths about this ancient race abound, but most are contradictory. For example, some believe that it was this great race which caused the planet to become tidally locked with its sun. There are several religions based on worship of the "lost gods" – as the race is often called – but followers of these faiths are few.

The most widely held belief about the ancient race is that it was they who transplanted terrestrial life to Radole. For what purpose, no one can guess.

Civilization on Radole

All visitors to Radole agree on one thing: that it is the closest thing to Paradise that they've ever seen, or are likely to see in this life. The inhabitants of the planet are well aware of this, and one of their greatest fears is that their idyllic existence will be threatened or destroyed.

For this reason, the people of Radole are quite xenophobic. Settlers are downright unwelcome, and even transient visitors are treated with grave distrust. After all, might not some tourist, unaware of the way things work on Radole, ruin the civilization the natives have enjoyed for so many centuries?

The people on Radole are well aware of spelljamming technology, and use it to defend their home. The Imperial Radole Navy consists of 35 ships of the line (Hammerships) and twice that number of support vessels (Dragonflies, Damsellies and Wasps). A screen of vessels is always in space, ready to challenge any approaching craft, and a strike force of larger ships is capable of lifting off within a couple of hours of the alert being given.

Ships accosted by the defensive screen must be able to give a very good reason for visiting Radole before they're allowed to enter the planet's atmosphere and land. No matter how exemplary the visiting ship's reason, however, it will always be escorted down by one or more Radole

vessels, just to be sure it doesn't make any untoward moves. On the ground, visitors can leave their ships only when escorted by members of the Radole Planetary Defense Force – a well-armed and well-trained paramilitary group formed for just this purpose. The PDF includes warriors, mages and clerics.

After reading the discussion above, one would be justified in thinking that Radole society is highly militarized, but this is not so. There are no enemies on the planet to fight, and the entire Ribbon is politically one nation, so there is no need for a standing army. Apart from the Fleet and the Planetary Defense Force – which Radole society sees as necessary evils to protect their way of life – the planet is totally non-military in character.

Radole society is incredibly lawful in outlook, however. There are laws covering virtually every facet of life, from birth to death, and from love to revenge. There is no real police force, nor need of one. Everyone in the culture recognizes the need for laws, and accepts those that are in place. If someone is known to have broken a law, the rest of society will turn away from that person, shunning him and basically expelling him from the society. For the people of Radole, this is the ultimate punishment, and enough of a deterrent to keep the entire Ribbon virtually crime-free. Most natives of Radole find it difficult to even conceive of breaking a law.

This can hardly be said of any visitors to the planet, of course. People of Radole have an incredibly low opinion of anyone who comes from another planet, and expect visitors to be inveterate criminals just waiting for an opportunity to do something heinous. Obviously, with this kind of mind-set, the PDF escorts will be looking for the slightest sign of criminal behavior and – considering how extensive the body of Radole law is – they're almost certain to see some behavior to confirm their view. At the first sign of criminal activity, the perpetrator and any comrades – read "accomplices" – are whisked before a Judiciary Committee of the PDF. Here the "criminals" are tried for their crimes. The burden of proof is on the "criminals" – that is, on Radole you're guilty unless proven innocent – and ignorance of the law is no excuse. Punishment depends on the severity of the crime, and on the mood of the Judiciary Committee at the time, since the Committee has complete freedom in sentencing outworlders. Sentences range from stiff fines, to involuntary servitude, to imprisonment, to summary execution. In most cases, however, the Committee will sentence visitors to death, then suspend the sentence... as long as the "convicts" perform some monumental task, usually something much too dangerous to risk Radole natives on. Examples include exploration trips to Sunside or Darkside, bringing back a young mithril dragon for study, or something similar. Of course, the PDF keeps hostages to ensure that the convict performs the appropriate duty. On successful conclusion, the convict's death sentence is usually transmuted to banishment (on pain of death, of course).

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It is categorically impossible for anyone not born on Radole to become a citizen. It is theoretically possible – although exceedingly difficult and unlikely – for a visitor to so earn the trust of the Radole people that he or she can travel the planet without PDF escort. (Historically, this has happened only twice. In both cases, the individual involved was an elf, who spent several centuries on Radole before being granted this freedom.)

Other Comments

Although unsubstantiated, there are rumors that Radole necromancers have ringed the planet with “minefields” to deter unexpected visitors. These minefields consist of animated skeletons, folded up into small bony balls, and then scattered through space. If one should fall into the atmosphere envelope of a ship, the skeleton unfolds itself and attacks anything near it. (This tactic is discussed in more detail on pages 62-63 of the *Lorebook of the Void*.)

The DM should remember the hazards of travelling to either Sunside or Darkside. On Sunside, the temperature is high enough to melt soft metals. This might have an effect on certain weapons or types of armor. Flammable materials will burst into flame in 1d4 turns of exposure to full sunlight. Characters who aren't somehow resistant to fire or heat take 1d20 points of damage per round of exposure to the killing temperatures. DMs can add other consequences as they see fit.

On Darkside, the temperature is low enough to condense the oxygen out of the air. Thus characters must make some provisions for breathing. Characters who aren't somehow resistant to cold take 1d20 points of damage per round of exposure to the brutal cold. The temperature is so low that most metals become brittle. Each time a metal weapon is used to strike a blow, there is a 25% chance that the weapon will shatter. A similar situation holds for metal armor: each time the armor is struck, there is a 50% chance that it will crack, increasing its Armor Class by 1. When the character's AC reaches 10 (or 9, if a shield is used), the metal armor is considered to have been totally destroyed. DMs can add other consequences as they see fit.

Adventure Hooks

- The PCs have a run-in with the Imperial Radole Fleet in orbit around the planet. Perhaps the fleet mistakes the PCs' ship for one that had tried an unauthorized landing several weeks ago, and attacks on sight.
- The PCs have a mission to deliver an important message to some influential character on Radole. This means they have to get past the defensive Fleet – one way or another – land on the planet and seek out the message's recipient. This should give them plenty of time to run afoul of Radole law, with potentially interesting consequences.
- On Radole, one of the PCs – or an important NPC from on

board ship – has broken a law, and is sentenced to death. The PCs must rescue this unfortunate, then make their own escape.

- The PCs break some Radole law, and are sentenced to death... unless they accept a dangerous mission. Possible missions are:
 - Find out what the pseudo-humanoid “shapes” are on Darkside.
 - Bring back an immature Darkside tunnel worm.
 - Bring back a supply of some particular metal from Sunside (a wizard needs the metal for his research).
 - Subdue or kill a small Sunside dragon.

Bodi

Overall Data

Bodi is a small spherical world of Size Class D. Its diameter at the equator is about 2,500 miles, giving it an equatorial circumference of approximately 7,855 miles. This is about one-third the size of Toril. It shows very little polar flattening. The planet rotates slightly more rapidly than standard, giving it a day of 18 hours.

Bodi is unique among the known planets in that it is the only earth world that has a ring. Bodi is encircled at the equator by a flattened ring of dust and ice crystals. The ring begins about 1,000 miles above the surface, and is 300 miles wide. It is barely more than a mile thick, however, and so is virtually invisible when viewed edge-on. This means that, from the surface on the equator, the ring can't be seen. From other parts of the planet, however, it's visible both day and night as a white arc against the sky. The dust and ice particles are so thickly packed that, from any distance at all, the ring appears totally solid. Apart from creating a spectacular view, the ring has no effect on the planet. It does represent a hazard to spelljamming vessels, however, and is massive enough to force a ship to drop to tactical speed. [Any ship trying to sail through the ring will suffer 1d8 points of hull damage in the transit.]

The composition of Bodi is standard: a solid crust surrounding a semi-molten mantle, with a core of liquid nickel-iron. Its magnetic field is about equivalent to that of Toril, but there is one difference: the magnetic axis is offset from the rotational axis of the planet by 15°. This can cause problems for compass-based navigation unless the navigator is aware of the offset. The planet is only slightly geologically active. There may be one or two active volcanos on the world, but they have yet to be mapped. Earthquakes are very rare, and very few of them are strong enough to cause damage. The last epoch of mountain-building was several million years ago, and the mountains have eroded considerably since then. Bodi is thus a world of smoothly rolling hills.

The planet's rotational axis is inclined at an angle of 15° to its orbital plane, which means that Bodi has regular seasons. Its magnetic axis is exactly perpendicular to the orbital plane.

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There are no oceans as such on Bodi, although there are many fresh-water lakes. Some of these are large enough to qualify as inland seas, but none are big enough to break the land mass into discernible continents.

Climate and Weather

Bodi has a very clement climate, comfortable for virtually any demihuman or humanoid race year-round. On the equator the temperature range is 65° (night) to 90° (day) in the summer and 40° to 75° in the winter. At the poles, the temperature range is 45° to 70° in the summer, and 35° to 50° in the winter. Thus, Bodi has no ice cap. Near the equator, humidity is very high – 90% relative humidity and up, making summers very muggy. At the poles, relative humidity is nearer 30% – still not dry, but not muggy.

Rain is fairly common during spring and fall [3 chances in 6], less common during winter [1 chance in 6], and rare in summer [1 chance in 8]. Snow is unheard of on Bodi.

Winds are usually gentle, and very rarely reach gale force. [Use the standard Weather Conditions table from the inside cover, but subtract 2 from the dice roll. Treat results of 0 and 1 as “Becalmed.”]

Cloud cover is thin. In general, clouds only appear when there is precipitation, and even then coverage is almost never total.

Appearance from Space

Bodi appears as an emerald-green sphere streaked with thin bands of clouds. There are very rarely weather systems large enough to be seen from space.

Continents

Since there are no oceans as such on Bodi, the entire planetary surface can be considered a single continent. There are two very large fresh-water lakes – more like inland seas, really. One, on the equator, is called IruvenÇ by the inhabitants of Bodi; the other, slightly smaller, is near the south pole, and is called ÊradinÇ.

Life Forms

Bodi is a forest world. Its land surface is completely covered by forests of one type or another. Near the poles, where the temperature and humidity are relatively low, the forests are generally coniferous evergreens, similar to pines and firs. In middle latitudes, deciduous trees similar to oaks and maples are the rule. Near the equator, where it's hot and damp, great spreading deciduous trees form thick, fetid rain forests.

Bodi is a world blessed with a wide variety of animal life. Its ecosystem is as varied and complex as those of Krynn, Oerth and Toril. Every ecological niche is filled by at least one species of creature. Most of these niches are filled by

creatures similar to standard terrestrial species, although there are often slight [and, in game terms, irrelevant] differences. For example, the scavenger niche is filled by six-legged rats that operate by hearing and smell rather than sight, and one of the more efficient airborne predators is actually an insectile creature the same size as an eagle, and with quite similar behavioral traits. [For DMs, the trick is this: figure out what creature would fill the niche on earth, and then ring some changes on it.]

There are two creatures on Bodi that are found on few terrestrial worlds. The largest non-sentient airborne predator is a massive creature called the gyre (discussed in the Appendix), and the larger lakes are home to monstrous fish [same statistics as giant pike, but different in appearance]. Apart from these two, Bodi has no “monstrous” animals (with two major exceptions, which will be discussed later).

Insect life flourishes on Bodi. Most insects are totally benign, however, except for a species of bloodsuckers – like terrestrial mosquitos – which live in the tropical rain forests. These deliver painful bites which raise itchy welts, but cause no significant physical damage. (They are highly aggravating, however.) Some travellers in the tropics have reported seeing giant, stone-hard mounds that could only have been created by creatures similar to giant termites, but these claims haven't been confirmed. If there are such giant termites on Bodi, they must be very few in number.

Bodi is also home to a wide range of bacteria and other microorganisms. All native life is immune to these bugs, however, and they cause no diseases. Non-native life almost always [80% chance] contracts an irritating disease within the first 24 hours of landing on the planet, however. This disease causes inflamed glands, sore throats, continuous sweating, and fever chills that last for about 24 hours. After that time, the symptoms go away and never recur. The disease causes no lasting problems, and there have been no reported cases of fatalities. [The PCs won't know this, however, and are quite likely to overreact – amusingly – when they think they're coming down with something dire. Normal clerical magic such as *cure disease* will immediately remove the symptoms.]

Guide to the Groundlings

There are three sentient races native to Bodi – although in one case, there is some dispute as to the term “native.”

Bodi is home to a relatively large population of green dragons. These creatures are totally indistinguishable from their counterparts on other planets, and have the standard powers, characteristics and personalities as described in the *Monstrous Compendium* and the *Draconomicon*. “Large” is a relative term when discussing such huge predators as dragons, of course. The whole planet is home to probably fewer than 3,000 of the creatures, so it's possible to totally avoid their attentions. The green dragons of Bodi speak only their own tongue; none understand or speak Common.

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The next sentient race are the tasloi (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 5 (6); MV 9 CI 15; HD 1; THAC0 19; #AT 2 or 1; Dmg 1-3/1-3 or by weapon; SA surprise; AL CE). These sly and malicious humanoids frequent the steamy tropical rain forests, and hunt in the trees, killing and eating anything unfortunate enough to cross their path. The tasloi aren't particularly numerous. Research indicates that there are probably fewer than 20 tribal groups on the planet, each with 50 to 100 members. (Of course, it must be admitted that the margin of error in this estimate is very high...) Most tasloi speak only their own tongue, although there are some who speak a smattering of the green dragon tongue.

Finally, there is a population of perhaps 2,000 high elves on Bodi, spread throughout the temperate regions. Although elves did not naturally arise on the planet, they have been here long enough – perhaps 20,000 years – to qualify as “native.” Nobody – not even the elves themselves – knows how this population came to Bodi. Folk tales recall that the elves “fell from the skies,” which might imply that they're the descendants of survivors from a crashed spelljamming vessel. Over the millennia, however, these elves have “gone native.” They have forgotten their origins, and the fact that they're part of a major race throughout the cosmos. Bodi is the only world they know, and hence makes up “the universe” for them. Their language has changed with time, and now they speak a highly modified form of elvish which is only 25% comprehensible to a speaker of modern elvish (and vice versa, of course). No elf on Bodi speaks any other language, including Common.

The Bodi elves are highly intelligent, and have a well-developed culture, similar to elvish civilizations on other terrestrial worlds. They are sadly lacking in magic, however. There seem to be fewer than 10 wizards on the entire planet, and none of them are highly skilled [4th level maximum]. Their selection of spells is greatly limited, and those spells that they do know differ greatly in verbal, somatic and material components from the standard versions (although the effects and other details are unchanged). This leads some sages to believe that the original survivors of the (putative) crash contained no spellcasters, and that the elves have had to redevelop the study of magic from scratch – an amazing achievement, even for creatures who live more than a millennium.

Perhaps surprisingly, the Bodi elves have no form of religion. This is taken by some as an indication that the original survivors didn't include a cleric.

The elves of Bodi know of the existence of only three sentient races: green dragons, tasloi and themselves. Thus they will be shocked and surprised to meet any explorers. While they are by nature curious, elves are also cautious. Keeping in mind that, on Bodi, anything intelligent that isn't an elf likes to eat elves, visitors should watch their step to

avoid being categorized as enemies.

There is no central elvish civilization as such. The population is divided into loosely-knit tribal and family groups, rarely numbering more than 25 individuals. Groups cooperate when it's appropriate, but generally prefer to live their own lives.

The elves, of course, have no knowledge of spelljamming. Should visitors arrive and prove themselves friendly, the elves will enjoy hearing tales of the greater universe – if the language problem can be overcome – but will have scarce desire to leave their home.

On the topic of spelljamming, the tasloi have no concept of its existence, and couldn't care less. Visitors from another world simply represent more food – food that isn't familiar with Bodi, and thus will probably be easier to catch. The green dragons, surprisingly, do know that spelljamming exists, but have no interest in it. Since a spelljamming vessel represents a potential rival for “air superiority,” chances are good that the dragons will attack any low-altitude vessel on sight.

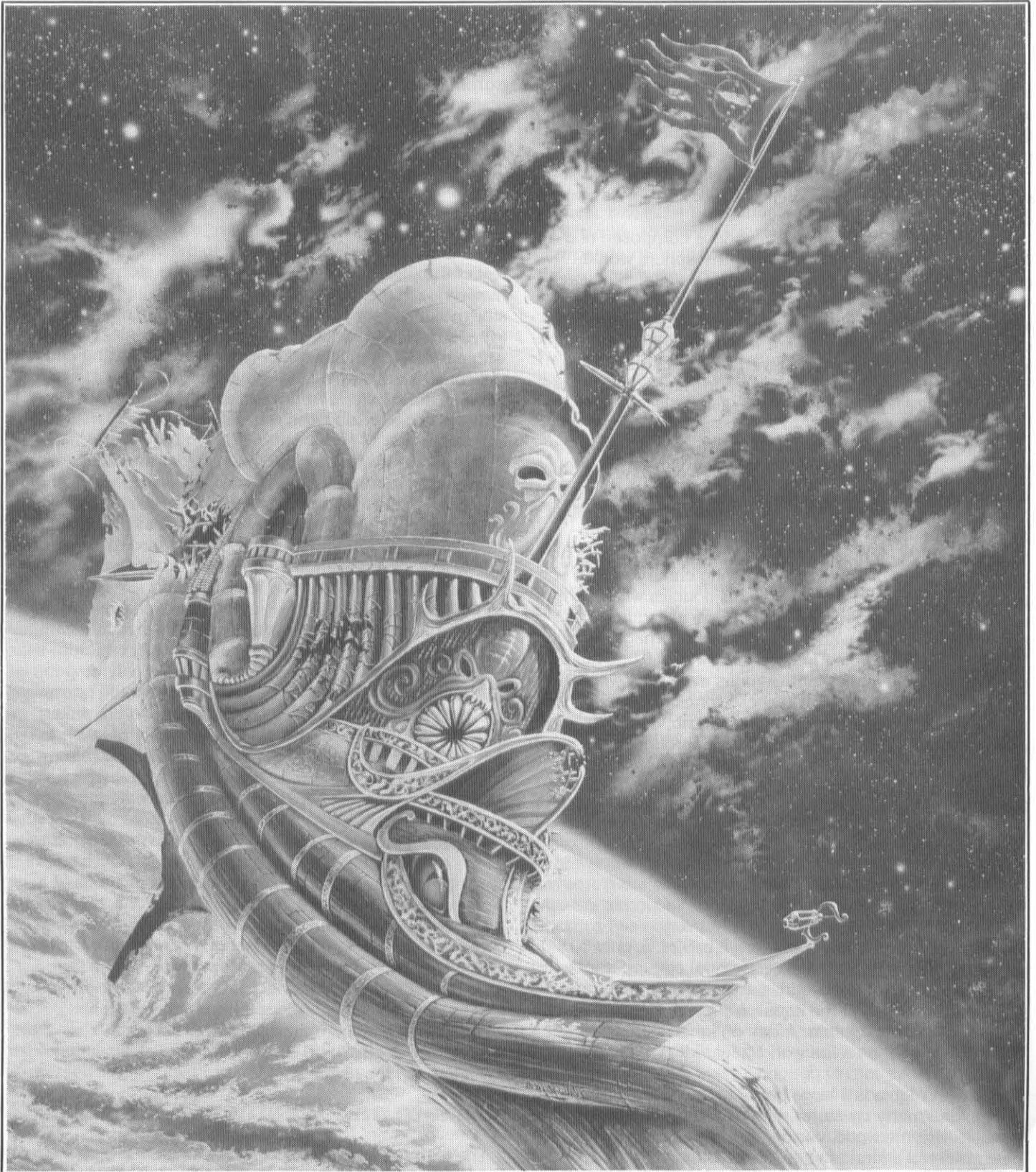
Other Comments

Bodi is virtually covered with forests, which makes landing a problem. There are some clearings, but these are typically small. Most clearings, too, have been made by the green dragons, to allow them to land. For this reason, water landings on the many lakes are by far the best choice.

Adventure Hooks

- The PCs know of another vessel that has crashed on Bodi, and are on a mission to rescue the survivors. These survivors have fallen into the hands of the tasloi, and represent the main course at an upcoming tribal feast. The PCs must rescue the “meal” before the festivities start.
- The situation is similar to the above, except that the survivors were found by the elves. Because the survivors responded to the elves with the paranoia typical of flyers downed on a strange world, the elves decided they were enemies, and took them captive for interrogation and probable execution. The PCs must free these captives. Since the elves aren't evil, and were only protecting themselves, any rescue should be as non-violent as possible.
- While looking for a place to land, the PCs are engaged in the air by one or more green dragons. As a result of the ensuing dogfight, the ship may be damaged, and the PCs may have to deal with the groundlings to get her repaired.
- The PCs have been hired by the elvish Imperial Navy to investigate rumors of a lost elvish colony on Bodi, and report back with details. To succeed, they must establish friendly relations with the elves (not necessarily an easy task).

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3 – Fire Bodies

Introduction

Strictly speaking, fire bodies are the most common objects in Wildspace...since, after all, suns and stars qualify as fire bodies, and since there are numerous crystal shells that contain suns with no planets orbiting them. For the purposes of this discussion, however, we will disregard “suns” – that is, fire bodies that are the primaries of their systems – and concentrate on those rare fire worlds that orbit another primary.

The most common form of fire world is composed of a flaming gaseous atmosphere. This atmosphere would normally be breathable by normal forms of life...if it weren't raised to such a temperature that breathing it would instantly burn out the lungs of any normal creature foolish enough to try. The core of a fire world is often a small sphere of liquid fire, or, more rarely, a portal to the Elemental Plane of Fire. Most fire worlds have one or more portals to this Elemental Plane somewhere within their mass.

To quote the *Lorebook of the Void*, “The danger to star travelers on fire worlds is the inhuman heat, such that ships and their crews will be destroyed unless protected. In game terms, think of the fire world as being surrounded by rings or zones of heat. As the characters move closer to the center, the heat increases. At the farthest zone there is no heat or fire damage. One zone in, living creatures take 1d6 points of damage per round, and this doubles with each ring moved into, to a maximum of 30d6 per round. Hulls take similar damage with 10 hit points of damage equaling 1 point of hull damage. Fires will start with the first hull point of damage, and at farther zones even rock will liquefy and steel will melt. The size of these zones depends on the size of the fire body, but as a rule of thumb, a body falling uncontrollably toward the sun will pass through one ring per round.”

Adventurers wishing to explore the fire bodies described herein must find some way to protect both themselves and their ship from the extreme heat.

Ignia

Overall Data

As fire bodies go, Ignia is a dwarf: It is Size C, only 1,000 miles in diameter, giving it an equatorial circumference of about 3,142 miles. The world is slightly flattened at the poles and extended at the equator, presumably due to its extremely fast rate of spin. A day on Ignia is only 6 hours long. (Of course, on a fire world “night” is a relative term anyway...)

The core of Ignia is a large portal to the Elemental Plane of Fire, and many creatures native to this plane use the portal to visit the world. Among the efreet, Ignia seems to be considered a kind of vacation destination, and about a score of the creatures can usually be found playing in this

world's fiery atmosphere. There is also a small, permanent civilization of efreet on the sole region of solid land.

Perhaps because of the size of this central portal, Ignia is extremely hot. Unlike most other fire worlds – whose light is orange, red or yellow – Ignia's atmosphere burns a brilliant blue-white.

There is a single island of solid iron that floats at the margin of Ignia's flames and its superheated atmosphere. This floating island is known as Salome, and is home to a population of fire-loving creatures.

The surface of Ignia is dotted with “sunspots”: circular areas that appear dark in contrast to the brilliance of the rest of the planet. They are in fact circular storms similar to hurricanes that extend down into the fire. The “eye” of the storm is an empty cone, about 10 miles in diameter at the top, 50 miles in length, tapering down to a point. The air within the eye is much colder than the surrounding fire, and the cone extends – invisibly – outward to the margin of the planet's atmosphere. At the extremity of the planet's atmosphere envelope, the cone of cold air is 50 miles in diameter.

[The air within a sunspot is much colder than that which surrounds the storm. Using the discussion of “zones of damage” in the introduction, at any given distance the air within a sunspot is the same temperature as normal air 25 zones farther out from the surface of the planet. How does this work? Normally at the surface of the fire world, any exposed character would suffer 30d6 points of damage per round from heat. Within a sunspot, however, the character would suffer only 5d6 points of damage per round. One zone out, where the damage would normally be 29d6 points per round, within a sunspot it would only be 4d6 points. Five zones out, where the damage would normally be 25d6 points per round, within a sunspot a character would suffer no damage at all. In the vicinity of Ignia, a “zone” is approximately 33 miles thick. Thus, within a sunspot, a ship or character could approach to 165 miles (33 x 5) from the planet's surface without suffering any damage.]

Theoretically, a ship could use the cone of a sunspot to come relatively close to the surface unscathed. There are three significant difficulties however. First, the cone of a sunspot is invisible in the atmosphere. Second, the sunspots move around randomly at relatively high speed [equivalent to SR 1, tactical speed]. Finally, sunspots are given to vanishing with little to no warning. [Each turn, there is a 5% chance (non-cumulative) that a given sunspot will spontaneously vanish... perhaps leaving a ship suddenly and catastrophically without protection.] There are usually 2-40 [2d20] sunspots in existence scattered over the surface of Ignia.

Climate and Weather

The extreme heat of the surface whips the atmosphere of Ignia into mighty storms. [To determine the atmospheric

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conditions at any time, use the Winter column of the Weather Conditions table on the inside cover, but add 4 to the die roll.) The weather conditions immediately surrounding a sunspot cone are always "Gale," while the conditions within the cone are "Light Breeze." In the atmosphere directly above the floating island of Salome, conditions are considerably less extreme. [Use the Winter column, with no die roll modifier.] There is never precipitation of any kind on Ignia.

Appearance from Space

Ignia appears as a small sphere of almost blinding blue-white light. Drifting dots of darker blue – the sunspots – are barely visible, while the island of Salome appears as a region of black that moves around the planet's surface.

Continents

The only continent is the floating island of Salome. This continent is a jagged oval, 50 miles along its major axis and about 30 miles along its minor axis. It floats on the margin between the world's central fires and its superheated atmosphere. Salome drifts with the winds and the currents in the fire, and its position can never be predicted with any accuracy. It seems to spend marginally more time near the equator than near the poles, but at any given time it might be found anywhere on the planet.

Salome is made of solid iron. Although the temperature of Ignia's fire is normally enough to turn iron to liquid, Salome itself remains solid, and doesn't even seem to be softened by the great heat. The iron glows a bright cherry red, however. [The effects of touching the surface of Salome are the same as those of touching metal raised to "searing" temperatures by the priest spell *heat metal*. For details, see the spell description in the second edition *Player's Handbook*.] Its upper surface is generally flat, although there are some low, rolling hills. The landscape is dotted with small lakes of molten metals – mainly tin, which has a considerably lower melting point than iron. In the center of the island is a large city known as Morroc, apparently built from blocks of iron quarried from the surface. (Perhaps these quarries are now the tin lakes.)

Sages argue about how Salome can remain solid. Some believe that the metal continent is magically protected – perhaps by the actions of the efreet who dwell there – while others claim that the iron island is supported by a very large – and hence very cold – sunspot. The only way to test this latter hypothesis would be to plunge into the fire and explore directly beneath the island...and nobody has yet expressed the slightest interest in doing so.

Life Forms

Ignia is home to a wide variety of creatures normally native to the Elemental Plane of Fire, and perhaps other

fire-dwelling creatures as well. Whether these creatures have all come to Ignia through the interplanar portal at its core, or whether some have arrived at the planet by other means – perhaps by journeying through space – is currently unknown, although virtually every sage has his or her own theory.

There are known to be significant populations of salamanders (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 5/3; MV 9; HD 7+7; THAC0 12; #AT 2; Dmg 2-12, 1-6 (weapon); SA heat 1-6; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; AL CE) and fire bats (similar to giant bats, described in the *Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 1, except that they are larger and immune to fire; AC 8; MV 3, Fl 18; HD 2; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg 2-6; SD immune to fire; AL N) dwelling in the fires of Ignia. The latter also fly through the hot atmosphere, apparently playing in the strong winds and thermals above the surface. Here, they frequently come into combat with flame swallows (discussed in the Appendix), which seem to prey on the fire bats and vice versa. Wandering efreet can also be found throughout the central fires of the planet. These may be inhabitants of Salome, or visitors to Ignia directly from the Elemental Plane of Fire.

Guide to the Groundlings

The most important intelligent race on Ignia is the efreet. There is an estimated population of 200 of these mighty creatures on the floating island of Salome. They live in the city of Morroc, located in the center of the continent.

Morroc is a relatively large city, and appears capable of accepting a population of at least 2,000 efreet. Why the city is only one-tenth occupied is open to conjecture. Some sages believe that the city's population once was closer to 2,000, but that most of the efreet left or died out for one reason or another. Other sages claim the opposite: that the population of Morroc is expected to eventually reach the 2,000 mark. The efreet know, presumably, but they aren't telling.

The efreet population in Morroc is highly organized and structured. The ruler of the city is an old and very powerful efreeti known as the Padishah Khomos. He is assisted in governing the city – and the entire island – by five Amirs, who are almost as powerful as he. It is thought that Khomos has reigned as Padishah for several centuries.

All other efreet dwelling on Salome have sworn eternal loyalty to Khomos, and will follow his orders unquestioningly. They will also give their lives to defend him, if this becomes necessary.

The efreet culture in Morroc is strongly lawful, and very evil. Any other creature unfortunate enough to wander into the area, and not powerful enough to make its escape, will be captured by the efreet and turned into a slave. Rumors state that there are several salamanders, and even a family of fire giants, kept as slaves. (Some sages deny this last rumor, since they consider it impossible for fire giants to survive long on Salome, despite their resistance to fire.)

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Again, there are recurring rumors that various spelljamming craft have visited Salome, and that their crews were taken as slaves by the rapacious efreet. It is virtually certain that all of these unfortunates would have died when the magical protections that kept them safe from the killing heat wore out.

While the lives of their slaves are generally unpleasant and short, the efreet of Morroc enjoy an extremely high quality of life. They practice art and music, and consider themselves the most enlightened of their kind in the multiverse. Many efreet keep flame swallows as pets, and there is much (comparatively) friendly competition between individuals over the beauty of their winged friends.

The efreet almost certainly know that spelljamming technology exists, but they seem unable or unwilling to use it themselves. After all, why should they want to leave their wondrous home? Salome in general, and Morroc in particular, has just about all an efreeti could desire from life. Spelljamming vessels are a convenience, since they occasionally bring them new slaves – albeit short-lived ones.

Adventure Hooks

- An approaching spelljamming craft is damaged by curious flame swallows, and the PCs must find a way of repairing their vessel. This might involve landing on Salome, and interaction with the efreet.
- The PCs have been hired or instructed to discover the fate of an earlier expedition to Ignia. They find that the previous vessel set down on Salome, and that the explorers were enslaved by the efreet. The PCs must rescue these unfortunates before their fire-protection magics wear out.
- As soon as the PCs' vessel enters Ignia's atmosphere envelope, it is attacked by a group of efreet accompanied by trained flame swallows. These efreet are either out for a little fun (in which case, the DM should play them as magical juvenile delinquents) or looking for new slaves (in which case the raid might be well-planned and executed with military precision).
- The PCs have been hired by a sage who wants a live flame swallow for his studies. (Acquiring such a creature will be a challenge, even without the possible involvement of other fire-using creatures.)

Garrash Overall Data

The exact opposite of Ignia in many ways, Garrash is a colossal world: Size J. Its diameter is 15 million miles, giving it an equatorial circumference of 47 million miles. As such, it is over 2,100 times the diameter – and over 9 billion times the volume – of Toril, and larger than all but the most extreme and unusual suns. In fact, Garrash has the distinction of being considerably larger than the primary

in its own system. It rotates slowly, having a day of about 200 hours.

Garrash is much cooler than most fire worlds. It burns with a dull red light, making it look at a distance like a sullen, dying ember. The world is thought to have a core of molten iron, rather than liquid fire. There is certainly no transplanar portal at the world's center, although there may be spontaneously-occurring gates elsewhere within its immense volume.

[Garrash is so cool – comparatively speaking – that the damage its heat inflicts at its surface is “only” 20d6 points per round. Garrash is surrounded by 20 – rather than 30 – “zones” of decreasing heat and damage, each 750,000 miles thick.]

Garrash has one single “sunspot” that seems to have been in existence for several decades; it is known as the Great Storm. It drifts slowly around the equator of the world. Like the smaller sunspots on Ignia, the Great Storm appears as a darker circle against the glowing face of the world, and seems to be a circular storm of some kind. This storm, however, is almost one million miles in diameter.

[Unlike the sunspots of Ignia, Garrash's single spot is a cylinder, not a cone. It extends far down into the body of the planet, and to the margin of the world's atmosphere envelope. The air within the Great Storm is much colder than that which surrounds it. Using the discussion of “zones of damage” in the introduction, at any given distance the air within the Great Storm is the same temperature as normal air 15 zones further out from the surface of the planet. Normally at the surface of Garrash, any exposed character would suffer 20d6 points of damage per round from heat. Within the Great Storm, however, the character would suffer only 5d6 points of damage per round. One zone out, where the damage would normally be 19d6 points per round, within the Great Storm it would only be 4d6 points. Five zones out, where the damage would normally be 15d6 points per round, within the Great Storm a character would suffer no damage at all. Since a “zone” around Garrash is 750,000 miles thick, this means that a ship could approach within 3.75 million (750,000 x 5) miles of the surface without suffering any damage as long as it remained within the Great Storm. Since the Storm is so large, and moves so slowly, staying within it should pose little problem.]

Garrash is encircled around its equator by a ring of liquid fire. This ring begins 5 million miles above the surface, and is 1 million miles wide. It is only 50 miles or so thick, however, which makes it virtually invisible from edge-on. [Any ship entering the ring suffers 1d4 hull points each round that it remains within the liquid fire; in addition, flammable objects on deck are automatically ignited. Any unprotected character on deck suffers 10d4 points of damage each round.]

Garrash has a single moon – small in comparison to the planet, but still a Size E world in its own right – called Taran. Unlike most other moons, Taran is in a polar orbit

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around Garrash; in other words, it passes over the poles rather than circling around the equator. Its orbital period is 50 standard days. Taran orbits at a distance of 5.5 million miles, which means it passes right through the heart of Garrash's ring every 25 standard days. This periodic blast-furnace passage has turned Taran into a featureless sphere of semi-molten rock. From just about any distance, Taran is dwarfed into invisibility by its primary.

Climate and Weather

Winds in the hot atmosphere of Garrash are slow, and huge areas are often becalmed for days at a time. [Use the Summer column of the Weather Conditions table on the inside cover, but subtract 6 from the die roll. Consider results of 1 or less as "Becalmed."] The atmosphere around the periphery of the Great Storm is always in "Storm" conditions. Within the Great Storm, the conditions are "Becalmed."

There is no normal precipitation on Garrash. However, there are rare cases of so-called "fire-rains" from the orbiting ring. When this occurs, sheets of liquid fire pour down from the ring. [Any creature or ship caught in a fire-rain suffers damage as if it had entered the ring itself. On any given day, there is a 1% chance of a fire-rain.]

Appearance from Space

Garrash appears as a dull red ball of flaming gas surrounded by a thin ring of yellow fire. The only feature large enough to discern is the Great Storm, which has a diameter about 1/15 that of the planet.

Continents

There are an uncounted number of "continents" floating about Garrash's fiery surface. Most are discs of metal or semi-molten rock, and all are small... but only in comparison to the massive scale of Garrash. The largest that has been reported – named "Greendale" by someone with an obviously twisted sense of humor – is 10,000 miles in diameter, giving it a surface area of about 78 million square miles, or about half of the total surface area of the planet of Toril. Nobody knows for sure how many of these continents there are, but the number is certainly in excess of 100.

As with the island of Salome on Ignia, these floating continents seem to be kept cool and solid by mechanisms – either physical or magical laws – that are not yet understood. Judging merely by the conditions on the surface of Garrash, it would seem that the mightiest iron or stone continent would be quickly reduced to liquid.

Only one continent, a relatively tiny example – only 500 miles in diameter – called Zaberie, has been explored to any extent at all. It is a rugged disk of basalt and granite, boasting impressive mountains and valleys over its entire

surface. The explorers reported valleys that appeared to have been carved by water, but temperature on Zaberie is such that no liquid water could possibly exist. Some theorists believe that Zaberie might once have been part of another world – perhaps another moon of Garrash – that somehow was shattered. If this is true, then the river valleys might have been carved while this chunk of terrain was part of another world.

The explorers chose to examine Zaberie over the other continents they'd spotted because of one rather strange characteristic of the island: it seemed to be somehow bound to the periphery of the Great Storm, and never moved far from it. This both intrigued the explorers, and also made it much easier for them to approach this chunk of land. Despite much investigation and the use of divinatory magic, the explorers were unable to discover the connection between Zaberie and the Great Storm.

Apart from Zaberie, the continents drift aimlessly around the planet, never seeming to collide or even to approach each other. Most are so large that they could be considered independent worlds in their own right. This must be kept in mind when reading the following sections: the information on life forms and groundlings refers almost exclusively to the continent of Zaberie. It's possible – and, indeed, quite likely – that conditions are totally different on other continents.

Life Forms

Garrash represents a large number of environments: the fiery planet itself, the heated atmosphere, the moon Taran, and the multitude of floating continents. Each that has been examined has its own retinue of life forms. There are even unsubstantiated reports of life that seems to have evolved in the gargantuan world's fiery ring.

The Planet

The fires of Garrash itself are home to many species native to the Elemental Plane of Fire. Salamanders, fire bats, flame swallows (discussed in the Appendix), efreet and many others make their homes in the flaming atmosphere of Garrash. Although there are some intelligent creatures that make their homes here, they are relatively few. The vast majority of the inhabitants seem to have animal intelligence, no higher. It is presumed that most of these creatures have found their way to Garrash through spontaneous interplanar gates to the plane of Elemental Fire within the world.

The Atmosphere

Garrash's hot atmosphere is home to competing populations of fire bats and flame swallows. These creatures are often seen swooping through the superheated air in massive "dogfights" comprising sometimes hundreds of the creatures.

3 - Fire Bodies

Taran

The moon Taran is rumored to be home to two heat-loving races: salamanders and fire snakes. These rumors have not been substantiated, however.

Continents

In truth, the only “continent” that has been explored to any appreciable extent at all is the floating island of Zaberie. The following comments might or might not apply to the other 100+ continents that drift around the surface of Garrash.

Zaberie has a wide-ranging ecology. The bottoms of the valleys and canyons are home to various species of fire-resistant trees and shrubs. Most have outer skins or barks that appear to be metallic, and their leaves are actually made entirely of metal – in some cases, precious metals. (Who says money doesn't grow on trees...?) There are many other fire-dwelling or -using creatures on Zaberie, including (but not limited to) fire snakes (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 6; MV 4; HD 2; THAC0 16; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA paralyzation; SD immune to fire; AL N), fire toads (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 1; AC 10; MV 6; HD 4+1; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg variable; AL CN), and salamanders (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 5/3; MV 9; HD 7+7; THAC0 12; #AT 2; Dmg 2-12, 1-6 (weapon); SA heat 1-6; SD +1 or better to hit; AL CE).

The most important inhabitants of Zaberie are creatures called azer (see the Appendix). They are discussed in more detail in the following section.

Recurring rumors claim that one of the floating continents is temporarily home to a creature known as Imix, Prince of Evil Fire Creatures. Nothing is known about this personage, but rumors claim that he is surrounded and served by many salamanders, fire elementals, and even efreet. Why this Elemental Prince might see fit to visit the Prime Material Plane is unknown, so this rumor is dismissed by most sages as a scare story only suitable for terrifying children.

The Ring

The ring of liquid fire that encircles Garrash is said to be home to a massive creature known as the zat (see Appendix). Next to nothing is known about this creature; indeed, most sages dismiss tales of the zat as the fantasies of heat-befuddled minds.

Guide to the Groundlings

The only known population of truly intelligent creatures on Garrash is a society of perhaps 10,000 azer who live on the floating continent of Zaberie. These small humanoids are virtually unknown elsewhere in the universe, unless summoned from their home on the Elemental Plane of Fire. Apparently, these creatures were sent by their ruler, Amaimon, to “claim” Garrash for their race. Unfortunately,

it seems that Amaimon had no conception of Garrash's size. It's absolutely certain that only 10,000 azer couldn't possibly stake out more than an insignificant portion of this gargantuan world.

The azer outpost takes the form of a complex of towers built from the basalt and granite of Zaberie. The complex is ruled by one of Amaimon's nobles, named Aladair. The azer civilization is very structured, with law taking precedence over individual freedoms – even an individual's life, if it comes to that. It seems that Aladair is continuously petitioning Amaimon for more azer to expand the race's “beachhead” on what should be a perfect planet for them. So far, the azer king hasn't seen fit to answer his lieutenant.

To be truthful, 10,000 azer isn't even enough to control the entire continent of Zaberie. The azer complex is located atop the continent's highest mountain, and holds uncontested all territory within 500 miles. Since Zaberie is some 10,000 miles in diameter, however, this means that the azer control only one four-hundredth of the continent's surface area. The vast majority is terra incognita.

So far there have been no significant challenges to azer dominance. But there are hints that this might change. There are reputed to be other intelligent – and territorial – creatures on Garrash, who are casting acquisitive glances towards Zaberie. If this is true, the azer might be in serious trouble.

The azer have little conception of spelljamming. They know that there are other forms of life in the universe – creatures that aren't fire-dwelling – but can't conceive of how these creatures exist. Any spelljamming crew who puts down in azer territory runs the risk of being captured and interrogated – or perhaps vivisected – by the unfriendly creatures.

Adventure Hooks

- The PCs land on Zaberie, and must stay out of the clutches of the azer. Alternatively, they must negotiate with the azer to get their ship repaired.
- The PCs are instructed to explore Zaberie and bring back samples of a precious-metal tree. This might bring them into conflict with the azer, who probably want to keep these strange plants for themselves.
- The rumors are true: a continent near Zaberie is ruled by Imix, Prince of Evil Fire Creatures. And this land is drawing nearer to Zaberie! The azer know they're in trouble, and try to persuade the PCs to help them out...
- The PCs approach the fire-ring and find a friendly vessel in combat with one or more zats. The PCs must either fight off these monstrous creatures, or convince them that the other ship is no threat to them.
- The PCs' ship is damaged – perhaps by a zat – and they put down on the moon Taran. They have only a few days in which to make repairs – perhaps hindered by magmen and/or lava children – before the moon plunges once more into Garrash's fire-ring...

4 – Water Bodies

Introduction

Water worlds show a greater diversity than do fire worlds. Some water planets are frigid worlds, encircled by a crust of ice, or even solid ice to the core; some are almost boiling. The majority have an atmosphere, while some few have none – the water is separated from the vacuum of space by a semi-elastic membrane.

Most water worlds have at least some solid land: islands floating on or within the planet's watery sphere. Most also have a solid core, although the immense pressure at that depth would crush the most rugged ship like an eggshell.

Unless the particular world has islands that float atop the water – or unless stranger circumstances hold, as with the planet of Thalassa, described below – exploring a water world requires the use of magics such as *water breathing* or *airy water*. Of course, these constraints are much less than would hold with a fire world.

Thalassa

Overall Data

Thalassa is a Size D world, perfectly spherical, with a diameter of 3,500 miles and a circumference of about 11,000 miles. It rotates on its axis in almost exactly one standard day (24 hours). Its rotational axis is exactly perpendicular to its orbital plane, so Thalassa has no seasons.

Thalassa is one of those few water worlds without either atmosphere or suspended bodies of solid land. It is surrounded by an elastic “skin” which may be broken and reseals after something or someone has passed through it.

Thalassa has a one-mile-thick “mantle” of water that has very different properties from the rest of the planet. This water has a great amount of dissolved oxygen – and, in fact, is referred to by sages as “oxywater.” Air-breathing creatures can breathe oxywater and extract enough oxygen from it to survive. Breathing oxywater is an unpleasant and quite frightening experience, and it takes a significant effort of will to do so. Creatures can extract less oxygen from oxywater than normal, and this has various effects on their abilities. (These effects are discussed in greater detail in the section “Other Comments.”) Water-breathing creatures are also able to breathe oxywater, with no disadvantages. Thus Thalassa is virtually the only place in the universe where both air- and water-breathing creatures can coexist without the use of magic – to a depth of one mile from the surface, at least. At depths greater than one mile, Thalassa is normal water. There is a distinct division between oxywater and normal water, and this division is visible as a wavy layer of dust and plankton. Air-breathers who penetrate this layer will drown unless they immediately return to the breathable area, or unless they have access to suitable magics.

The water on Thalassa – both the oxywater and normal

water – contains a small amount of dissolved salt. Thus it is neither truly salt nor truly fresh, but a mixture of the two. This means that both salt water and fresh water creatures can exist on the planet.

Climate and Weather

The water of Thalassa is a constant temperature from the surface right down to the planet's core: a comfortable 75° F. This is thought to be because there is an interplanar gate to some other, hotter plane at the core of the planet, although the intense pressures at the innermost depths have made any investigation impossible.

There are gentle currents through both the oxywater and normal water, none of them exceeding a couple of knots in speed. Currents do not cross the division between oxywater and normal water, so there's no enforced mixing of the two.

Since Thalassa has no atmosphere, there's no weather of any kind above its surface.

Appearance from Space

Thalassa appears as a featureless blue-green sphere.

Continents

There is no solid land on Thalassa.

Life Forms

The water-bound ecosystem of Thalassa teems with life. Virtually every form of purely aquatic creature has been reported on Thalassa. It's important to point out, however, that Thalassa has no solid ground, so creatures which can only dwell on an ocean floor – such as aquatic elves, vodyanoi, etc. – are not found on the planet. There are no aquatic mammals such as whales or dolphins native to the planet.

The normal water region of the planet – the vast majority of its mass – is home to the larger, and generally more dangerous creatures: giant pelagic sharks like the Megalodon (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 5; MV Sw 18; HD 10-15; THAC0 11-7; #AT 1; Dmg 4-16, 5-20 or 6-24; SA swallows whole; AL N), giant squids (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 7/3; MV Sw 3 Jet 18; HD 12; THAC0 9; #AT 9; Dmg 1-6 (x8)/5-20; SA constriction; AL N), and evil beasts like the kraken (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 5/0; MV 3 Jet 21; HD 20; THAC0 5; #AT 9; Dmg 3-18(x 2)/2-12(x6)/7-28; AL NE). For some reason, these huge creatures rarely if ever penetrate the oxywater layer, and remain in the black depths.

The normal water region is also home to a population of sahuagin (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 5; MV 12 Sw 24; HD 2+2; THAC0 16; #AT 1 or special; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-4/1-4/1-4 or by weapon; AL LE). Unlike most other sahuagin populations, these “seadevils” live exclusively in the open ocean, without the sea-floor cities typical of their

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kind. They inhabit the region just beneath the division between oxywater and normal water, but often raid the oxywater region for slaves and food.

The oxywater mantle of Thalassa is home to smaller, less deadly creatures. The mantle is inhabited by a great profusion of fish, many of surpassing beauty. Few of these are baneful. The mantle is also home to a civilization of mermen (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 7; MV 1 Sw 18; HD 1+1; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA grapple ship; AL N). There is also a small number of nixies living in the oxywater mantle.

The division between normal water and oxywater – known to the inhabitants of Thalassa as the “Layer” – is home to a vast number of plankton species, which form a layer up to 50' thick. Creatures on both sides of this barrier use it as a convenient source of food.

Guide to the Groundlings

The two most important sentient populations on the planet are the sahuagin and the mermen. No-one knows how many of each type of creature exist on Thalassa, although there are thought to be many thousands of each, spread around the world.

The Sahuagin

The sahuagin operate in multi-family bands of up to 150 members. Each band claims and defends a territory about 20 miles on a side. A territory rarely extends more than one mile below the Layer, and doesn't extend at all above it. Sahuagin bands often stage raids into the oxywater above the Layer, but these are usually hit-and-run affairs, quickly terminated to avoid counterattacks by the mermen. Under normal conditions, different bands will not cooperate, and in fact often stage raids into each other's territories. There are legends, however, that tell of a time some centuries ago when a source of great magical power fell into the oxywater mantle of Thalassa. (Unfortunately, the legends don't describe what this object was, although some sages believe it was a spelljamming vessel carrying a stash of powerful magical items.) At this time, four complete bands of sahuagin staged a cooperative raid into the oxywater mantle to acquire this source of power. It was a close-fought thing, but the mermen – who are by nature more cooperative – managed to repel this invasion. There's no reason to believe that the sahuagin might not repeat this kind of raid if the potential gains are great enough to warrant it.

Sahuagin by nature are cruel and rapacious, and may the gods help anyone unfortunate enough to fall into their grasp.

The sahuagin have no conception of spelljamming as such, and would have no interest in it – other than as a potential source of power in their ongoing raids – even if they discovered it existed.

The Mermen

The mermen of Thalassa also organize around multi-family bands. These bands are usually smaller than sahuagin groups, numbering between 50 and 75. They are not territorial in the normal sense, but do have an innate understanding of “fish farming” and ecological principles. Thus, each band will live in a certain region, and will rarely encroach on the domain of another band.

Mermen are naturally more cooperative than sahuagin, and the continuing raids by the seadevils have enhanced this trait. One merman band will automatically come to the aid of another should it fall under attack. This cooperation is probably the sole reason why the sahuagin have been so unsuccessful in defeating their enemies.

The mermen of Thalassa are more comfortable in the oxywater mantle, and have no territorial ambitions with regard to the normal water below the Layer. This is based on several good reasons. Firstly, the fish that they farm live exclusively above the Layer. Secondly, while the sahuagin that raid above the Layer rarely bring with them sharks and other monsters from the depths, should the mermen try to conquer the seadevils beneath the Layer, they'd have to fight not only the sahuagin but also monstrous fish and sharks. Thirdly, even when it comes to horrid creatures such as the sahuagin, the mermen are basically peaceable creatures, and have no stomach for a war of conquest. (A war of *defense* is another matter entirely, of course.)

Over the centuries, the mermen have become suspicious of strangers, fearing that newcomers to the world might be potential allies of the sahuagin. Thus, they'll treat any explorers with grave distrust until the visitors prove their good intentions. Once the visitors have done so, however, the mermen will consider them eternal friends and allies.

While visitors can become trusted friends, settlers are another story. The mermen consider the oxywater mantle of Thalassa as theirs, and will do whatever it takes to discourage other creatures who want to make it their permanent home. This discouragement will initially take the form of verbal persuasion, but – if necessary – will quickly escalate into war. So far, there has been no need for the mermen to forcibly expel an invasion from space, but they're ready to undertake the task if it becomes necessary.

The mermen have learned that spelljamming exists from various explorers who have made planetfall on Thalassa in the past. They even understand a little about how spelljamming vessels operate. (Thus they can prove to be invaluable assistants to a crew trying to repair a damaged spelljamming ship.) They have absolutely no interest in leaving their home world, however.

Other Comments

The oxywater of Thalassa's mantle has some significant effects on characters who try to breathe it. Firstly, air-breathing creatures have an instinctive fear of, and aversion

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to, inhaling any liquid. The first time that a character tries to breathe oxywater, he or she must make a saving throw vs. spells. A successful save means that the character has overcome his instinctive fears, and has forced himself to take oxywater into his lungs. Once a character has successfully breathed oxywater, he need never make this saving throw again, no matter how long he lives.

If the character fails the saving throw, however, it means that he or she has panicked. The character immediately bolts for the surface, or for the nearest source of “real” air (presumably the character is entering the oxywater from such a source of real air). He can’t make another attempt to breathe oxywater for 1d4 rounds – the length of time it takes for the character to get himself under control.

Only creatures with Low intelligence (INT 5) or better can willingly attempt to breathe oxywater. Semi-intelligent creatures or those with animal intelligence are totally unable to make a conscious effort to overcome their instincts and take their first lungfull of oxywater. Thus, a ranger’s pet wolf won’t willingly follow its master into the oxywater. An animal can be forced into the oxywater, of course; unfortunately, it will react to this as an attempt to drown it, and will fight ferociously to escape from those characters trying to “kill” it. Once an animal is beneath the surface of the oxywater, has taken its first breath and realized it can breathe, it will immediately relax and “go with the experience.” The next time characters try to immerse it in oxywater, however, it will react exactly as it did the first time – a wild attempt to escape.

The lungs of an air-breathing creature can extract much less oxygen from oxywater than they can from an atmosphere. This decrease in oxygen supply has two significant effects. Firstly, while breathing oxywater, an air-breathing creature has its Constitution score halved (round fractions down). This will affect the creature’s System Shock roll, and might affect its hit points. Secondly, the creature’s Strength is temporarily diminished by 2 – having a possible effect on “to hit” and damage calculations. Both of these effects are in effect only while the creature is breathing oxywater, and both vanish as soon as the creature returns to a normal atmosphere. (For example: Balfas the Warrior has STR 18/01 and CON 16. His high STR gives him a bonus of +1 to hit and +3 to damage, while his high CON gives him a hit point adjustment of +2 per die. While breathing oxywater, however, Balfas’s effective STR is only 16 – for a bonus of +1 to damage and no bonus at all to hit – and his effective CON is only 8 – which gives him a hit point adjustment of 0, meaning he temporarily “loses” 2 hit points per die.) It becomes obvious that adventuring in oxywater shouldn’t be approached lightly...

Creatures can move through oxywater only by swimming. Their buoyancy in oxywater is the same as it would be in normal water...which means that the average adventurer – equipped with armor, weapons, miscellaneous equipment like iron spikes and caltrops, and a purse bulging with coins

– would give an anchor a good race to the core of Thalassa. Water-breathing creatures can swim through oxywater at their normal movement rate, and are totally unaffected by its special properties.

Characters can talk normally in oxywater. Fire will not burn in oxywater, and electricity-based spells act as they do in normal water (see the section on “Underwater Combat” in the *Dungeon Master’s Guide 2nd Ed.*).

Adventure Hooks

- The PCs’ ship is damaged, and they must put down on Thalassa for repairs. The mermen will immediately come to investigate, and the PCs must persuade the distrusting creatures that they represent no threat.
- The PCs land on Thalassa. The sahuagin of the region learn that a “great source of magic” – the PCs’ ship – has fallen into the hands of the mermen, and they fear a general assault on their territory. (Obviously, they don’t fully understand the peaceable personality of the mermen, and judge all races by their own attitudes.) Several bands of sahuagin join forces, and stage a major raid to capture the ship. The PCs must either escape, or assist the mermen in the defense of their ship.
- A sahuagin raid is already underway into merman territory. The mermen beg the PCs to assist them in turning back these enemies.
- A PC or significant NPC falls into the clutches of the sahuagin (perhaps he or she was captured while exploring). The PCs must stage a rescue mission before their colleague is tortured to death and eaten. The PCs may be able to persuade the mermen to assist them in this task, but it won’t be easy...
- An item of great significance to the mermen has been stolen by the sahuagin. The mermen ask the PCs to “re-acquire” it for them. As the PCs are exploring the oxywater mantle, a powerful monster from below the Layer enters the mantle to attack them and/or the mermen – perhaps a kraken. The PCs must fight off this hideous creature.

Charon

Overall Data

Known as the “planet of the dead,” Charon is a spherical Size C world, about 1,000 miles in diameter, with a circumference of 3,148 miles. It rotates very slowly, giving it a day of 72 hours. (Because of conditions on Charon, this isn’t much of an issue, however.) Its axis is perpendicular to its orbital plane, so there are no seasons.

Charon is one of the more common type of water worlds: it has several floating “island continents,” and has an atmosphere. The water that makes up most of the planet is normal water, not the oxywater found on Thalassa. The oceans of Charon are very salty, and slightly poisonous to creatures not native to the world. [Any character swallowing

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some of the water must save vs. poison or suffer 1d4 points of damage.]

The history of Charon is fascinating and apparently unique. It used to be a moon orbiting a planet called Nex, a Size E world that was inhabited by a race of evil, warlike, and highly magically active, humans. These humans fought continually, in great global wars that swept back and forth across the surface of Nex. Several hundred years ago, they fought what they called “the war to end all wars.”

They were right. The mighty – almost god-like – magical forces that were released during this war destabilized the entire planet, and it exploded cataclysmically, killing all of its inhabitants. Several fragments of Nex fell into the oceans of Charon, and became the smaller world’s floating continents.

With its primary planet gone, the erstwhile moon Charon continued on alone in its orbit. Other than the few floating continents, there are no fragments of the destroyed planet left in the system. Presumably, they all fell into the sun and were vaporized.

Charon’s continents all float atop the global ocean. Their upper surfaces are thus exposed to the atmosphere.

Climate and Weather

Despite the heat that reaches it from its sun, Charon is a cold world. This is due to the make-up of its atmosphere. While breathable, it is thick with cloying mist. This mist decreases visibility ranges to 10% of normal; this effect applies to infravision as well. The mists drift slowly in the planet’s gentle winds to a maximum altitude of about one mile. Above that altitude, the planet is cloaked in an unbroken cloud layer. For some unknown reason, the underside of this cloud layer glows with a pale and sickly green light, which is virtually the only illumination that reaches the surface of the planet, since the clouds allow almost no sunlight to pass through. Thus, the level of illumination at Charon’s surface is about equal to twilight (with attendant effects on visibility). The oceans are virtually lightless.

The air of Charon is cold and damp, with an average temperature of about 50° F. This doesn’t change significantly between day or night, or from the equator to the poles. Humidity is high, hovering around the 95% mark. The water, too, is very cold: about 35° F. This temperature remains constant from the surface to the core of the world.

The cloud layer is several thousand feet thick. A ship passing through the clouds suffers no ill effects, however.

The atmosphere of Charon is almost perfectly still: wind conditions fluctuate between “Becalmed” and “Light Breeze,” but are never stronger than that. On any given day, there is 1 chance in 8 of precipitation: a miserable, cold drizzle. There are no currents in the oceans of Charon.

Appearance from Space

Because of its unbroken cloud layer, Charon appears as a featureless gray-white sphere. From space, there is no way to recognize it as a water world.

Continents

There are six land masses that float about on the surface of Charon’s planetary ocean. All are fragments of Nex, the planet that was destroyed centuries ago. None are named.

The continents are jagged, uneven shapes, and are small compared to the planet. The largest is roughly circular, and about 50 miles in diameter. Most are rugged, with knife-edged mountains and sheer canyons. The force of the explosion that smashed Nex has shattered the rock structure of the mountains. There are flat cleavage planes – looking like places where a mountain was chopped in two by a sharp axe – and mighty boulders everywhere.

The continents float randomly around the planet. They never draw nearer than perhaps 10 miles from each other. Nobody knows how massive chunks of heavy rock can float on water, or what forces move them yet keep them from colliding.

Life Forms

Charon has two distinct ecosystems: the planetary ocean and the island continents. There is a third *potential* ecosystem – the atmosphere – but the fact of the matter is that nothing lives in the air or clouds of Charon.

The Oceans

Life forms that are native to Charon all dwell in the oceans. (After all, there was nothing but ocean until Charon’s companion planet was blown to bits.) There are, however, very few native life forms. The vast majority are small, blind fish that swim through the dark oceans, feeding on plankton and occasionally on each other. For these fish, vision has been replaced by an enhanced sensitivity to pressure changes: They can detect, localize and identify movement within about a 50’ radius of their position.

The top of the Charon food chain is held by carnivorous fish similar in appearance and behavior to salt-water versions of quippers (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 8; MV Sw 9; HD 1/2; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1-2; SA swarm; AL N). These fish congregate in great schools near the surface. Unlike their prey, they have eyes. Thus, the most common defense that other fish use to defend themselves – total immobility – does nothing to confuse the quippers.

All fish native to Charon are mildly poisonous to non-native life. [Any creature eating a Charon fish must save vs. poison or suffer 1-3 hit points of damage.]

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The Continents

Strictly speaking, there are no forms of life on the rocky island continents of Charon. Nevertheless, these areas of land are inhabited.

When Charon's partner, Nex, was destroyed, every living thing on that larger world was killed. However, the souls of the evil humans who destroyed their own world haven't passed on. The island continents of Charon are haunted by undead!

Guide to the Groundlings

Even before its destruction, powerful undead were common on the planet Nex. Almost all the rulers of its many warring states were mighty wizards who had chosen to become liches to increase their powers and to ensure their eternal rule. Some few had lieutenants who were spectres, or even vampires. Thus, the world of Nex was ruled by the dead – a necrocracy.

When Nex was destroyed, and fragments of its surface fell into the planetary ocean of Charon, this situation didn't change much. The undead rulers generally managed to escape destruction. Their followers, however, weren't so lucky. Many of the more evil of them now inhabit the island continents as wraiths and even spectres, plus some of the less common incorporeal undead.

Civilization continues to exist on the island continents, and is a perverted reflection of the lawful evil culture that once was prevalent on Nex. Each of the six island continents is ruled by a lich of great and fell power. Of these six, three have one or more vampires as lieutenants, who have remained loyal beyond death. The other undead that occupy the continents are generally loyal to, and follow the orders of, the liches and their lieutenants.

There are unsubstantiated rumors that some of the rulers of the island continents have used their magical powers to build cities of great and awesome majesty for their creatures to dwell in. Nobody who has actually seen such a necropolis (city of the dead) with his own eyes seems to have made it out alive, however.

It is thought that the rulers are continuing the wars that destroyed their home planet. There are tales of great navies manned by undead sailing across the oceans that separate the island continents, and of massive battles between powerful undead mages. Other than warring on their neighbors, nobody can even guess at what activities the "citizens" of these necrocracies pursue.

The vampires, spectres, wraiths and lesser undead retain their eternal hatred of living creatures, and will almost certainly attempt to kill any character unfortunate enough to come within their ken. The rulers of the island continents are different, however. While they, too, hate the living, they also have cruel senses of humor, and will probably taunt and play with their victims before finally killing them. Using

their magic, they might create whole fantasy landscapes, nightmarish worlds to bedevil their prey before the final stroke falls.

The rulers are well aware of the existence of spelljamming technology, and want to acquire it for themselves. While their initial intention is to use spelljamming vessels to bomb enemy states into oblivion, they know that there's a big universe out there, just waiting to be subjugated. The attitude among the rulers seems to be, "Today Charon, tomorrow the universe!" The rulers will do whatever it takes to acquire spelljamming technology from anyone unfortunate enough to stumble within range of their powers. While some might use great illusions to persuade visitors to help them willingly, most will just take what they want, and the gods help anyone who gets in their way.

Other Comments

DMs should remember that liches have had centuries, perhaps millennia, in which to develop new spells and increase their powers. The undead rulers of Charon's island continents might well possess spells and powers never before seen, and orders of magnitudes greater than anything the PCs have ever faced before. After all, these were creatures who managed to destroy an entire planet...

Adventure Hook

- The PCs land on an island continent. The local ruler knew they were coming, and has created an illusory land – probably something very peaceful and idyllic – to welcome them. Telling stories of "rapacious undead" on other island continents, the ruler will convince the PCs to help him defend his land. When he's learned everything he can from the PCs about how to use spelljamming vessels for war, he'll drop the illusions, and send his lesser undead to destroy the unfortunate visitors.
- The PCs have been detailed to rescue the crew of a small ship that went down on one of the island continents. The crew have so far been successful in dodging or destroying the lesser undead coming after them, but now there's an organized campaign underway to capture the crew and take them to the continent's ruler for interrogation. The PCs must rescue this crew, then escape with their own lives.
- There are rumors that the ruler of one island continent already has acquired spelljamming technology. He also possesses the power to shatter other planets as he and his enemies did Nex. (This power might be a scroll, or some kind of item.) This ruler has decided that dominating Charon is "small potatoes." His target is another planet in the same shell or a nearby one. It's this planet that's hired the PCs to do a "hit-and-run" raid to destroy this ruler's spelljamming vessel(s) and – hopefully – the planet-smashing item as well.

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Barbuda

Overall Data

Barbuda is a tiny, spherical planet: Size C, about 750 miles in diameter, with an equatorial circumference of approximately 2,350 miles. It rotates on its axis in about 18 hours. Its axis is inclined very slightly to the plane of its orbit, so it has seasons.

Barbuda has a breathable atmosphere, and has many islands of rock and coral. Some float on the surface of the ocean, while others drift several hundred feet below the surface. These islands drift randomly around the face of the world, never coming closer than a mile or so apart, and never colliding. The water that makes up most of the planet is normal water, not the oxywater found on Thalassa. The oceans of Barbuda are salty, but not extremely so.

The core of Barbuda is a small ball of hot iron about 5 miles in diameter. This heats the depths of the water, while sunlight heats the oceans nearer the surface. The consequence is that the waters of Barbuda are remarkably consistent in temperature at most depths.

Climate and Weather

In terms of climate, Barbuda is like a planet-sized tropical sea. Water temperature is constant, regardless of depth, at about 82° F, and doesn't fluctuate significantly from summer to winter. There are gentle currents, and occasional upwellings of water from nearer the core of the planet. These currents are sometimes slightly warmer than the surrounding water.

Air temperature ranges from about 90° F by day to 70° F by night. There is only a little temperature difference between summer and winter, and between the poles and the equator. Winds on Barbuda are most frequently gentle, although rarely great storms blow up. [Use the "Summer" column of the Weather Conditions table on the inside cover, with no modifier to the dice roll.] Precipitation is rare year-round [1 chance in 8 on any given day], and always takes the form of gentle, warm rain (except during storms and hurricanes, of course, when it's heavy, warm rain).

Barbuda has clouds, but they're usually very high up and scattered. The only time that cloud cover is complete is during a storm, gale or hurricane.

Barbuda is renowned for having among the most beautiful sunsets in known space.

Appearance from Space

Barbuda appears as a world of breath-taking blues and greens, streaked with thin clouds of the purest white. From space, most of the floating islands are too small to see. Sunlight often reflects off the oceans, appearing as sparkles of gold against the azure seas.

Continents

Barbuda has almost one hundred islands floating on the surface of its planetary ocean, and about as many drifting several hundred feet down. Most of these islands are very small, however: no more than a couple of hundred feet across, with some as small as a score of feet in diameter. Only one is significantly larger: a cigar-shaped island called Domina, which is three miles long and 1,500 feet wide at its widest point.

The islands that float atop the ocean seem to be made of rock, covered in a layer of coral. Those that drift below the surface are almost exclusively coral.

These islands drift slowly around the ocean. As on other water worlds, nobody knows what supports and moves the islands, and what prevents them from ever colliding.

Life Forms

Barbuda supports a diverse and rich ecosystem. As with most water worlds, this ecosystem can be divided into two "sub-ecologies."

The Ocean

Ocean life is very prolific on Barbuda. At the bottom of the food chain are many species of plankton. While these tiny creatures can be found anywhere within several hundred feet of the surface, they are most plentiful in the warm currents that meander through the ocean. Greater concentrations of plankton lead to greater populations of the small fish that feed on the tiny creatures, so these warm currents are also home to a great profusion of darting, colorful fish. These small plankton-eating fish are food to many species of predatory fish, up to and including sharks. On Barbuda, virtually all fish, even the largest sharks, are brightly colored.

Barbuda is also home to a great variety of plant life. Most plants take the form of sea weeds that grow on the underside of the surface islands, or all over the submarine islands. In general, the marine ecology of Barbuda is little different from that of any terrestrial tropical ocean.

There are two sentient races native to the oceans of Barbuda: sahuagin (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 5; MV 12 Sw 24; HD 2+2; THAC0 16; #AT 1 or special; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-4/1-4/1-4 or by weapon; AL LE) and sea sprites (*Greyhawk Adventures*, pages 30-31; AC 6; MV 6 Sw 24; HD 1; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA spell use; THAC0 17; AL CN(G)). These races are discussed in more detail in a later section.

The Floating Islands

Most of the islands that float atop the oceans have at least some plant life: grasses and reeds, mostly, although most have at least some trees. These plants give the islands a lush, green appearance. Many of the smaller plants, and

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almost all of the trees, bear brightly-colored fruit.

The islands are home to creatures that eat that fruit. There are many birds, and small mammals that fill the same ecological niche as rats. Larger animals are found on only the bigger islands. The largest and most dangerous species native to the islands of Barbuda is the banderlog (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 6; MV 6, 12 in trees; HD 4; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SD climbing; AL N).

The large island of Domina is unique, in that it alone has a population of sentient. Domina is home to a small family group of couatl, or feathered serpents, as well as the creatures common on the other islands. This couatl population is discussed more in the following section.

Guide to the Groundlings

The most populous sentient race, by far, is the sea sprites. There are many thousands of these tiny creatures, living in family groups throughout the oceans of Barbuda. They usually make their homes in coral caverns within the underside of floating islands. Generally fun-loving, they have absolutely no interest in anything that occurs outside their watery environment.

Until the discovery of Barbuda, it was thought that sea sprites existed only on the planet Oerth. To this day, some sages argue that the sea sprites of Barbuda must have been transplanted somehow from Oerth. The sprites themselves deny this: their own legends state that they were created on Barbuda through the will of the gods. This explains why, even when given an opportunity, sea sprites will never consider leaving their home world.

Sea sprites are reclusive, and will generally interfere in the actions of others only if they believe those actions represent a danger to the ecology of their home ocean. It's a documented fact that a group of half-orcs came to Barbuda and started to fish the oceans with great drift-nets. It's also a documented fact that, when a supply ship came to Barbuda two months later, there was no sign of the half-orcs. Their ship was found, run aground on a floating island, and totally empty. Although the sea sprites won't talk about the incident, the tiny crossbow bolts of sprite manufacture that were found in the deserted ship are evidence enough that the sea sprites had a lot to do with the half-orcs' disappearance.

The sea sprites and the sahuagin are implacable enemies. While the sprites are, in general, easy-going about other races as long as they don't disrupt the fragile ecology of the shallows, the small creatures will attack and kill sahuagin on sight. The sahuagin know this, of course, and rarely venture into the shallower waters except in groups. There are probably enough sea sprites on Barbuda to allow the smaller creatures to totally exterminate the sahuagin, but this won't happen for several major reasons. First, a genocidal war like this would be totally against the precepts of a race as ecologically aware as the sprites; after all, the sahuagin play a part in the ecological balance, and wiping

them out might have a serious impact on the planet. Second, such a war would require precise coordination between the different groups of sprites all over the planet, and this kind of organization also is totally against the nature of the small creatures. Thus the sahuagin are relatively safe.

The sahuagin live in deeper water, congregating around the submerged islands several hundred feet below the surface. The larger of these submerged islands support sahuagin cities each housing several hundred of the nasty creatures. There are often territorial wars between the sahuagin of different islands.

While the sprites wouldn't consider a war of extermination against the sahuagin, the converse isn't true: the sahuagin would like nothing better than to rid the oceans of the sea sprites once and for all. Fortunately for the sea sprites, there simply aren't enough sahuagin to make this possible. The sahuagin know they're outnumbered, and so limit their activities to occasional raids into the shallows.

The sahuagin of Barbuda know that spelljamming technology exists – presumably they learned of it from the half-orc drift netters before the sea sprites eliminated them. Sahuagin can breathe air – at least, for short periods of time – and so could theoretically make use of spelljamming vessels, as long as they were set up with a central pool like those used by lizard men. There are certain tribes of sahuagin who have ambitions of acquiring spelljamming craft, modifying them to meet their own requirements, and putting into space. There are two schools of thought as to why the sahuagin have ambitions in this area. One is that the seadevils want to find another world – one without an “infestation” of sea sprites – to take over. The other is that they want to seek allies to help them in eradicating the sprites. Whatever the reason, the sea sprites will do what they can to prevent the sahuagin from getting the ships they want.

The couatl living on Domina are a relatively recent addition to the ecosystem of Barbuda. Nobody knows exactly where the feathered serpents came from, or why they settled on this planet. The couatl themselves won't talk about their place of origin, or their reasons for leaving it; all they'll say is that Barbuda seems to them to be the perfect place to live. (Some sages believe that the couatl on Barbuda were actually banished or exiled by others of their kind, although these wise men can't even guess what action led to such a punishment. As expected, the couatl won't even dignify this speculation with an answer...)

The couatl are on friendly terms with the sea sprites, and sometimes help protect the tiny creatures against the sahuagin. The feathered serpents have much the same protective attitude towards the environment as the sprites, and so the races get on exceptionally well. They know that one band of sahuagin wants to acquire spelljamming technology, and agree with the sea sprites that this would be a bad thing. Thus, the feathered serpents will do what they can to keep the seadevils from their goal. Whenever a

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spelljamming vessel enters the atmosphere of Barbuda, there's a good chance that at least one couatl will fly up invisibly to examine it, and try to determine what its intentions are.

For themselves, the couatl have absolutely no interest in spelljamming. They're not "marooned" on Barbuda, by any means, since they can use their *plane shift* ability to leave any time they want to. Spelljamming visitors can almost be guaranteed of help if they're attacked by sahuagin – both because of the couatl's nature, and because the serpents want to keep spelljamming technology away from the seadevils.

Adventure Hooks

- A spelljamming vessel carrying valuable cargo has crashed on Barbuda, and the PCs have been hired to retrieve it. There are various adventures that can spring out of this:

- The sea sprites, who believe that "what has sunken in the sea belongs to the sea," try to prevent the PCs from salvaging the cargo.

- The sahuagin have captured the ship, and are trying to repair it. The sprites and/or the couatl want the PCs to get it back or destroy it before the seadevils can use it.

- For whatever reason, the couatl fear that the PCs are going to supply spelljamming technology to the sahuagin. One or more serpents meet the PCs' vessel as it comes in for a landing, and warn them off.

- The PCs have been hired to retrieve some item of value from one of the smaller islands. This will involve dealing – in one way or another – with the banderlogs.

- The PCs' vessel falls under attack by sahuagin. This can happen at sea, or when part of the crew is ashore exploring an island.

- While the PCs are exploring an island, the sahuagin capture their ship, perhaps sinking it so they can better modify it to meet their needs. The PCs must get their ship back if they don't want to spend the rest of their lives on Barbuda.



5 - Air Bodies

Introduction

Air worlds are the most common type of planet in the majority of solar systems. They range widely in size, but are often the largest planets in the systems.

Air worlds vary widely in other characteristics as well. While some are only spheres of gas, with no solid material anywhere within them – even at their core – many have floating or orbiting masses of earth, water or even fire. Many air worlds have very extreme weather patterns, since there's nothing – or very little – to block and diminish winds. Most air worlds have a layer of cloud cover, or many such layers, but there are some that have no clouds at all. These worlds can be totally invisible, and the first clue that a spelljamming captain might receive about such a world is when his vessel drops to tactical speed and he finds his ship is surrounded by an atmosphere.

Most air worlds have Earth-normal gravity. Some exceptional cases have diminished or increased gravity, while some have almost no gravity whatsoever.

Alabeth

Overall Data

Alabeth is a huge, roughly spherical air world – a “gas giant.” It is Size G, 50,000 miles in diameter, with an equatorial circumference of 158,000 miles. Alabeth is slightly flattened at the poles, giving it a polar circumference of 145,000 miles. It rotates slowly, with a day 30 hours long. Its rotational axis is perfectly perpendicular to its orbital plane, which means it has no seasons.

Alabeth has a core of liquid fire, about 10 miles in diameter (Size A). At the center of this core is a portal to the Elemental Plane of Fire. This accounts for the high temperature of the core, and the relative warmth of the planet as a whole. Although the portal exists, very few Elemental creatures ever use it to visit Alabeth. This is mainly because the liquid fire core – the only part of the planet comfortable for fire-dwelling creatures – is so small.

The atmosphere of Alabeth is breathable throughout. There are many layers of clouds – some explorers report as many as 500 – each of which is at least 50 miles from the next. The first cloud layer is at the margin of the planet's atmosphere envelope. The clouds on Alabeth are thick, almost opaque, usually brown or red in color, and some are mildly toxic [characters entering these poisonous clouds must save vs. poison or suffer 1d4 hit points of damage for each round spent within the layer].

Alabeth has many small moons; 15 have been reliably cataloged, although it's quite likely that explorers have missed some. The majority of these moons are Size A or B. The planet also has a thin ring of dust. This ring orbits the equator of the planet at an altitude of 3,000 miles above the cloud-tops. It is circular in cross-section, with a diameter of

100 miles. While the dust is dark and thick enough to be visible, it isn't thick enough to interfere with passage of a spelljamming vessel, and does no damage to ships or characters who pass through it. (It is massive enough to cause a spelljamming vessel to drop to tactical speed, however.)

Climate and Weather

The most important weather features of Alabeth are the concentric “shells” of clouds, alternating with clear air, that are nested one within another like the layers of an onion. These cloud decks are generally separated by about 50 miles of clear air, although some layers might be thinner or thicker. Most cloud layers themselves are about one mile thick, and are almost completely opaque. Thus the interior of the planet is never lit by direct sunlight. Most of the cloud layers themselves glow faintly, however, illuminating the clear air between them at a level equivalent to twilight. Some cloud layers have massive electrical storms raging through them, with the almost continuous flashing of lightning adding to the level of illumination.

As such gas giants go, Alabeth is a warm world. The temperature increases as one goes deeper into the planet and closer to its core of liquid fire. The outer “layer” – the outermost cloud deck and the clear air directly beneath it – has an average temperature of 50° F. Since the heat comes from the core, not from the sun, this temperature changes little – a maximum variation of 5° – from day to night and from equator to pole. For each “layer” descended, the temperature increases steadily. The average increase is about 15° F, so the temperature beneath the second cloud deck is 65°, that beneath the third is 80°, and so on. This increase is thought to remain constant down through all 500 or so layers, which would put the temperature of the layer nearest the core at over 7,500° F.

Each “layer” of Alabeth seems to have its own weather patterns. For example, the outer layer – the first cloud deck and the first clear area – is relatively peaceful. Winds are rarely extreme [use the “Summer” column on the Weather Conditions table on the inside cover] and precipitation is unheard of. Lightning is rare, and only occurs during storms and worse weather conditions. When lightning does occur, it's on a scale similar to that found on Earth.

The second layer is a completely different situation, however. Weather conditions are always “Gale,” and unpredictable gusts of wind powerful enough to damage the toughest spelljamming vessel spring up with no warning. [Such a gust has a 5% chance of occurring each turn, and inflicts 1d6 points of damage on a vessel. The vessel is entitled to a saving throw vs. crushing blow to halve this damage.] Chilling rain falls continuously, and lightning lashes incessantly. The lightning bolts are much bigger and more dangerous than those seen on most standard worlds. [It is suggested that DMs use these gargantuan bolts merely for “atmosphere” (no pun intended), rather than as direct

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threats to the PCs and their vessel(s). As an indication of scale, a vessel struck by one of these bolts would suffer 2d20 hull points of damage. A character would suffer 20d20 hit points of damage. A successful saving throw against lightning would halve this damage.]

There are enough “layers” to Alabeth to ensure that virtually any combination of weather patterns could be found somewhere within the planet. For example, in one layer the winds are such that warm rain falls upwards from the lower cloud deck, while in another rain falls in the expected direction but it is composed of organic material dissolved in water. [In other words, if the DM wants to throw a certain weather condition at his players, he should feel free to do so: just pick a layer, and go to it!]

Appearance from Space

Alabeth appears as a swollen, ruddy-brown sphere. The top of the cloud layer is virtually featureless. In comparison to the planet, the ring is very small, and so will only be visible at short range. The moons, too, are very tiny, and might easily be missed.

Continents

There are no true land masses on Alabeth. Some of its inhabitants, however, are large enough to qualify as minuscule continents in their own rights. These are discussed in the following section.

Life Forms

As each cloud-and-clear-air layer on Alabeth has its own weather patterns, so it contains its own virtually autonomous ecosystem. On one side of a cloud deck can be a species of peaceful, floating gas bags – like living hot-air balloons – without any means of self protection, while on the other lives a species of rapacious predators that would rip the gas bags into ribbons without any effort. Luckily – with one or two very rare exceptions – life forms at home in one layer simply won’t cross the cloud deck into the next. (Exactly why this happens isn’t known. The most widely-held theory is that Alabeth life forms each have their own instinctive aversion to wandering into a different – and totally alien – environment and ecology. Whatever the reason, it has given Alabeth a most diverse range of life.

Of course, the different ecosystems aren’t totally closed systems. Since there’s no solid land, virtually all species are fliers of one type or another, and death usually means they can’t fly any more. The corpses – or what’s left of them after scavengers have had their way – falls through the cloud decks into lower layers, providing food and a continuous source of new biological material for other ecosystems. Conversely, gasses released by creatures rise through the layers, supplementing their ecosystems. Also,

some layers are home to “aerial plankton” – tiny unicellular creatures – that sometimes rise through the clouds on upwelling winds. These plankton are a source of food for creatures in higher layers. (For example, the second layer – the one with the gargantuan lightning storms – is home to uncounted trillions of these creatures. Winds carry them both up and down, providing food for billions of creatures higher up the food chain.)

The two ecosystems that have been studied the most are those of the first and third layers. (Nobody in his right mind wants to spend much time in the second layer in case his vessel is blown out of the sky by a lightning bolt.)

The First Layer

The first layer is home to a bewildering variety of birds, and virtually nothing else. These birds form a complex, interlocking avian food chain. Every ecological niche – from scavenger to unchallenged predator – is filled by some form of bird. At the bottom of the food chain are small birds the size of terrestrial sparrows that feed on the “plankton” that rises from the second layer. At the top is a massive eagle-like predator with a 20’ wing span. [This creature has the following statistics: AC 5; MV 30; HD 3; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/2-8; THAC0 17; AL N. It can attack by biting with its curved beak, or by raking with claws that tip its powerful wings.]

Most of these birds are similar in appearance to terrestrial species, with one major difference: They have no legs. Predatory species make up for this lack with claws at the ends of their wings, similar to those of some species of bats. The fact that there’s nowhere to roost also necessitates another significant difference: females give birth to live young, rather than laying eggs, and these young can fly from the moment of birth.

The Third Layer

The ecosystem of the third layer is perhaps the most interesting of all, since it’s the only one known to be home to sentient. The most common creature of the third layer is something known as a holbag – a gigantic living gas bag that can grow up to several miles in diameter (see Appendix for details). These great creatures float on the gentle winds, absorbing plankton that drifts down from the second layer. Holbags form “floating islands” on which two sentient species live: unique forms of elves and troglodytes. These species are discussed in more detail in a later section.

Apart from the holbags, the most important creatures of the third layer are monstrous shark-like beasts known as sky scavvers (see Appendix for details). These great predators soar through the clear air, attacking small, old or wounded holbags, and anything else unfortunate enough to come into their ken.

There are other varieties of life along the same lines of the holbags, but smaller. There are also a profusion of birds, providing the sky scavvers with enough food.

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Other Layers

Alabeth has on the order of 500 distinct ecosystems, only a handful of which have been studied to any extent at all. There are unsubstantiated rumors about layers inhabited by winged humanoids, by couatl, even by dragons. The only way of confirming or denying these rumors is a more extensive exploration of the planet. [As suggested earlier, this planet represents almost total freedom for creative DMs.]

Guide to the Groundlings

The two most significant races in the upper layers of Alabeth are elves and troglodytes. Both live out their lives on the flat upper surfaces of holbags, floating through the atmosphere of Alabeth.

Nobody knows where the elves of Alabeth came from. In most regards, they are very similar to their fellows on other worlds. The only significant difference in appearance is that their eyes are much larger, with enlarged pupils – presumably to make up for the relatively low level of illumination on Alabeth. They speak a language that is obviously related to standard elvish, although there's been enough “linguistic drift” to make the languages only 25% compatible. (In other words, a speaker of “standard” elvish will understand about 1/4 of anything said in “Alabeth elvish,” and vice versa.) The written forms of the language are completely different, however. Someone literate in one form will not be able to read anything written in the other language.

Alabeth elves are organized around extended family groups, numbering 50 or so to as many as 200. Each such group lives on one holbag. As described in the Appendix, holbags mate every 10,000 standard days or so. At such times, two or more holbags will draw together, allowing intermixing of groups (thus preventing problems on in-breeding, etc.). Alabeth elves are as magically active as their fellows elsewhere in the universe – if not more so. This means that there are many magically-mediated ways of travelling from one holbag to another. Small parties of elves will sometimes use immature holbags as transportation from one “society” to another, and for hunting trips, although this is risky because of sky scavvers' appetite for young holbags.

The climate of the third layer is very comfortable for the Alabeth elves. The air temperature hovers around 80°, and there is little precipitation, which means there's no real need for shelter. The elves live in the open atop their holbag “floating islands.” Other ground-dwelling creatures also live on holbags, most notably a harmless rabbit-like creature. The elves practice animal husbandry, and raise enough of these creatures to feed themselves well. There are also many species of plants – most edible – that grow on holbags.

When the elves want some variety in their diet, they hunt smaller airborne creatures such as birds. Occasionally, daring groups of elves – usually heavily supported with

magic – will set forth on immature holbags and hunt the giant sky scavvers themselves.

The Alabeth elves have a very simple lifestyle. They have no predators to worry about – since even sky scavvers stay away from the healthy, mature holbags the elves choose as homes – and can spend their time in an idyllic existence. They enjoy music and poetry, and most individuals excel at both.

Nobody – not even the elves themselves – know how the Alabeth elves arrived on this planet. From their adaptation to the light level, it seems reasonable that they've been there for perhaps millions of years. The most logical theory holds that a spelljamming expedition crashed atop a holbag, and was unable to leave. Thus the entire elvish population of the planet would have arisen from this one small group.

Since the cloud cover overhead is totally opaque, the elves can have no way of directly experiencing the rest of the universe: they've never seen the stars nor other planets, and find it very difficult to even comprehend these concepts. The only other humanoid forms of life they're familiar with are troglodytes, and these are implacable enemies of the elves. Thus it's not surprising that the elves are highly suspicious of visitors. (The thought process seems to be, “You're not an Alabeth elf, so you're an enemy.”) Depending on the situation, Alabeth elves may attack strangers on sight, or just treat them with healthy distrust. Anyone who can win the trust of an Alabeth elf – a difficult task, to say the least – has got a friend for life.

Alabeth elves have no knowledge of spelljamming, nor interest in learning about it. They have no desire to leave their home.

The troglodytes have very similar lifestyles to the Alabeth elves. (This means that, despite their name, they don't live underground; granted, this is atypical.) They, too, live atop giant holbags, and subsist on the other forms of life that call holbags home. Unlike the elves, though, they haven't learned the technique of travelling on immature holbags, and don't have any magical abilities. Thus they're limited in what other creatures they can hunt.

Their favorite food is elf meat, however. When holbags come together to mate, the elves are at greatest risk. If a holbag carrying troglodytes mates with one carrying elves, the troglodytes will flood across in an attempt to kill and eat the elves. The elves are always ready for this kind of attack, though, and can usually repel it without many losses.

Troglodytes aren't overly intelligent, and have no knowledge of or interest in spelljamming as such. A spelljamming vessel that comes near their holbag will probably get their attention, however, but only because they sense that it's carrying food. The troglodytes will do whatever they can to bring down such a vessel and eat its crew.

[Troglodytes are described in the *Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2: AC 5; MV 12; HD 2; THAC0 19; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1-2/1-2/2-5 or 2-8 weapon; AL CE.]

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Other Comments

It's important for DMs to remember the massive scale of Alabeth. In the outer "layers," the curvature of the planet is almost impossible to discern. The horizon would be more than 100 miles away – greater than the range of visibility through even the clearest air. Thus, things would fade into the distance long before they vanished over the horizon.

Adventure Hooks

- The PCs' vessel is damaged in a clash with giant eagles in the first layer. They must repair it before it drops into the apocalyptic second layer.
- Perhaps after a brush with sky scavvers, the PCs put down on a holbag inhabited by elves. They must persuade the elves that they're not troglodytes – or something equally dangerous – and make repairs.
- There's a group of elves aboard a holbag that's come down with a major disease. The next mating period is a long time off, and their home isn't going to live that long. Also, the sky scavvers sense the holbag's deteriorating condition, and are attacking both it and the elves on its upper surface. The PCs are the elves' only hope of making an exodus to another holbag before their home plunges from the sky. (Perhaps the only nearby holbag has a population of troglodytes who won't exactly welcome the refugees with open arms...)
- An immature holbag is being pursued by sky scavvers, and tries to "snuggle up" against the PCs' ship for safety. Besides probably scaring the daylight out of the PCs, it makes the scavvers aware of the ship...

Nubis

Overall Data

Nubis is small as air worlds go, "only" Size E with a diameter of 10,000 miles and an equatorial circumference of about 31,500 miles. The planet has no polar flattening. The planet rotates at approximately the standard rate, giving it a day of 24 hours. Its axis is inclined at 15° to its orbital plane, so it has normal seasons.

The entire atmosphere of Nubis is breathable, with the exception of the central core. The planet's core is a sphere of impenetrable cloud with a diameter of 15 miles. This cloudy core is dirty grey in color, and is extremely poisonous to most creatures. [Any creature attempting to breathe this cloud suffers 2d10 hit points of damage each round.

Creatures receive a saving throw vs. poison each round to halve this damage.] There is no solid material at the core of Nubis, so a spelljamming vessel could theoretically sail right through it (presuming that the ship's occupants are somehow protected from its poisonous effects, of course). Visibility within this cloudy core is only 10 feet.

The atmosphere of Nubis is filled with clouds. Unlike the

clouds of Alabeth, however, these don't form solid "decks." Instead, they take the form of large, puffy cumulus clouds, looking like giant balls of pure-white cotton wool. The average size of a cloud is about 3 miles in diameter, although much larger and much smaller clouds exist.

Nubis has a single moon, a Size D sphere 2,000 miles in diameter. This moon, called Ob, is a Voidworld (i.e., no atmosphere) made out of pure granite. It has no known life. Ob is in an equatorial orbit around Nubis, with an average distance from the planet of 20,000 miles and an orbital period of 25 standard days. Ob has an interesting tidal effect on Nubis: there is always an enormous cloud directly opposite the moon, on the other side of the planet. This "tidal cloud" is roughly spherical, with a diameter of about 150 miles. It remains about 50 miles below the margin of Nubis's atmosphere envelope. For some reason unknown to sages, Ob occasionally releases a "rain" of thousands of fist-size stones, which fall into the atmosphere of Nubis and burn up like tiny meteors. This "firestorm" of stones never penetrate the atmosphere to reach even the highest clouds, but create a spectacular display in the night sky. [Each night that the moon is visible in the sky, there is a 5% chance (non-cumulative) of a "firestorm." A spelljamming craft between Ob and Nubis during a "firestorm" will suffer 1d3 hull points of damage from the experience.]

Climate and Weather

The air temperature on Nubis doesn't change significantly with altitude. The average summer daytime temperature is about 85° at the equator, dropping to about 70° at the poles. At night, the temperature drops by approximately 30°. In the winter, the temperature range at the equator is from about 70° (day) to 40° (night), while the range at the poles is 40° (day) to 33° (night). These temperatures vary little – by perhaps 5° – from the core to the margin of the atmosphere envelope.

There are winds on Nubis, but they rarely get very strong, even compared to "well-behaved" terrestrial planets. [Use the appropriate seasonal column on the Weather Conditions table on the inside cover, but subtract 3 from the dice roll. Results of 1 or less are "Becalmed."]

Cloud cover is total only directly under the "tidal cloud." The only time there is a chance of precipitation is when this tidal cloud is directly overhead. [When the tidal cloud is overhead, there is 1 chance in 4 of torrential rain.]

The skies of Nubis are usually a delicate robin's egg blue. This color darkens with increasing altitude to a rich midnight purple.

Appearance from Space

Nubis appears as a richly-colored blue sphere, embellished with blotches and streaks of snow-white clouds. Ob is visible as a featureless sphere of pale grey. From space, it's impossible to tell that Nubis isn't an earth world.

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Continents

There is no solid land on Nubis. Some of the clouds, however, are semi-solid. In the case of some clouds, this is due to the actions of the clouds' inhabitants, while in the case of others it seems to be a characteristic of the planet itself. [These semi-solid clouds have the texture and resilience of soft foam rubber. Anyone walking on one will sink in up to the ankle (for human-weight creatures) or to the knee or even higher (for heavier creatures). There is no way to tell a semi-solid cloud from an insubstantial one by observation alone, making flying through a cloud a risky proposition for a spelljamming vessel. Any vessel unwise enough to ram a semi-solid cloud immediately has its hull points reduced by one-third of the total original value. (Thus a Hammership would lose 20 hull points.) In addition, everyone aboard suffers 4d6 hit points of damage (save vs. death for half damage) from being knocked around.]

Approximately one cloud in 100 is semi-solid, with the rest being the standard insubstantial masses of partially-condensed water vapor. This figure should not be taken as categorical, however, since the proportion varies from place to place. In some regions, there are no semi-solid clouds at all, while in others almost every cloud is semi-solid.

Semi-solid clouds drift slowly from place to place, sometimes under control of their inhabitants, sometimes at random. Drifting clouds generally have a Movement Rate of 2 (equating to an SR of 2) or less. Unless under conscious control of some creature, a semi-solid cloud won't come within 250 yards of another semi-solid cloud. Uncontrolled semi-solid clouds won't come within a mile of the tidal cloud.

Nobody knows just how many semi-solid clouds there are on Nubis, but estimates range from 5,000 to well over three times that.

Life Forms

Nubis is home to an ecosystem that has two very distinct parts. The first is the true airborne component; the second consists of cloud-dwellers.

The skies of Nubis are home to a great variety of birds and other non-sentient flying creatures. There are many species of hawks and eagles, preying on an even greater variety of smaller birds. There are also more unusual creatures such as stirges, hippogriffs and griffons. The largest non-intelligent creature known on Nubis is a species of wyvern. This beast is identical to its terrestrial counterparts, except that it is a tireless flier and never has to roost (a good thing, since there's no safe place for the beast to set down).

The semi-solid clouds are home to several more powerful, intelligent creatures: silver dragons, cloud giants and storm giants. These three races are discussed in a later section.

According to legend and rumor, some semi-solid clouds are inhabited by other intelligent creatures. For example, there is one travellers' tale that claims the tidal cloud itself is semi-solid, and home to a civilization of undead – mainly wraiths

and wights, but with a few spectres mixed in for variety – under the command of one or more vampires or liches. If this is true, it explains why none of the expeditions to the tidal cloud to determine its structure or cause has returned...

Guide to the Groundlings

The semi-solid clouds of Nubis are home to several hundred – or perhaps as many as several thousand – silver dragons. These great creatures live alone or in small family groups of two to five, the family “clan” being the more common organization. Each clan – or, in the case of solitary dragons, each individual – claims one semi-solid cloud as home. They don't limit themselves to this home territory, of course. Silver dragons can be found winging through the air literally anywhere on Nubis, plucking birds from the air. Or they can be found, generally polymorphed into giant form, consorting with the good giants that dwell on other clouds.

The silver dragons of Nubis are on very good terms with the storm giants and the good-aligned cloud giants that share their world. The dragons often spend time visiting their giant friends, enjoying massive feasts and displays of musical skill. The dragons depend for their food mainly on the birds of Nubis. Perhaps surprisingly, the silvers don't prey on the wyverns. Instead, they feel somewhat protective towards these great beasts, and are making a concerted effort to train them out of their rapaciousness. The dragons believe – and will expound at length on this theory – that wyverns have a glimmering of intelligence, and all they need is a “helping hand” to develop to almost the same level of sentience as silver dragons. For this reason, the silvers react badly to anyone who hunts the wyverns, or who kills one without adequate reason (and “adequate” is in the judgement of the dragons, of course).

The silvers have a detailed origin myth which explains how they came to Nubis. In this myth, the first dragon – a female named Ewa, who was heavy with unlaidd eggs – was brought forth on the planet by a deity named Kraken, who appeared in the form of a great squid. It was from Ewa's first brood that the entire dragon population of Nubis descended. According to dragon mythographers, Ewa lived 30 dragon generations ago – at a guess, about 7,500 years ago.

There are many sages who interpret this myth in a totally non-supernatural light. Ewa, they say, was a pregnant female who was transported to the planet Nubis from elsewhere, aboard a Squidship that was named the Kraken (quite a reasonable name for a Squidship, after all). As partial support for this interpretation, these sages point out that the silver dragons of Nubis don't worship any deity named Kraken. Supposedly this is because they know, deep down, that the myth describes intervention that is totally non-divine.

The silvers know that spelljamming exists, and have been visited many times by explorers. Visitors who are not disruptive to the planet, who do not kill the wyverns, and

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who are basically good-aligned are welcomed, even befriended, by the silvers. Those who aren't good-aligned are watched closely, and with great suspicion, and those who perform overtly evil acts are driven off or destroyed.

The storm giants of Nubis are on the best terms with the silver dragons, despite a minor alignment conflict (chaotic good for the giants, lawful good for the dragons). Luckily, neither race is obsessively hard-nosed about its interpretation of "goodness" – as gold dragons might be – and the two species get on fine. In fact, each thinks of the other as a balancing influence. The giants welcome the dragons' more responsible influence, while the dragons appreciate the giants' suggestions to "loosen up" once in a while.

Storm giants live in loosely-knit tribal bands of up to 10 individuals. Each tribe claims its own semi-solid cloud as home. The silver dragons gladly ferry young giants back and forth between clouds, so there's little worry about in-breeding. Tribes are always on good terms with their neighbors, with the silver dragons, and with families of good-aligned cloud giants nearby.

These giants hunt the larger birds that dwell in the atmosphere of Nubis. They also have found a way to plant and cultivate crops on their semi-solid cloud islands. A cloud inhabited by storm giants will have orderly fields in which grow a wide variety of foodstuffs: grains, vegetables and fruits. There will also be extensive vineyards. The storm giants pride themselves on the wine they make, and enjoy showing off their best vintages to their friends, and even to visitors who've earned their trust.

Storm giants have no origin myth as such. They believe that they've been on Nubis for as long as the planet's existed, but neither know nor care how they actually came into existence. They have learned about spelljamming technology – in theory, at least – from the silver dragons, but have absolutely no interest in leaving their homes. The giants are somewhat retiring, and are made uncomfortable by extreme displays of emotion. They will welcome any good-aligned visitors, but will feel particularly accepting of, and drawn to, those who respect their privacy.

Cloud giants on Nubis break down into two groups: good-aligned and evil-aligned. The former are much more common. Cloud giants live in small tribal groups, each group taking a single semi-solid cloud as its territory. Good-aligned giants congregate in tribes of up to 10 members; evil giants feel the need to form larger groups, up to 50 in number. These bigger groups are, by necessity, limited to the larger islands.

The good cloud giants are on excellent terms with the silver dragons and the storm giants. As with the storm giants, the silvers are happy to ferry cloud giants from cloud to cloud. Good-aligned tribes frequently have trained griffons as pets, while evil tribes often use wyverns as hunting animals.

All cloud giants, whether good or evil, hunt the birds and other flying creatures of Nubis. They also practice some farming on their cloud islands using similar techniques to

the storm giants. Unfortunately, they haven't perfected these techniques, and their farms yield nowhere near as much food as those of the storm giants. Good-aligned cloud giants don't have to worry about this shortfall problem because the storm giants are all too glad to share their surplus crops. Evil-aligned cloud giants have more trouble, and solve the problem through frequent raids on the farms of storm giants and other tribes of cloud giants. Good-aligned cloud giants, storm giants and silver dragons will often cooperate in repelling these raids.

The evil cloud giants sometimes wage wars of conquest, trying to wrest cloud islands from others. Again, coordinated defense usually turns back these attacks, but they can still prove troublesome.

Cloud giants of both alignments know that spelljamming exists. The good-aligned tribes find it intellectually interesting, although they have no great desire to use it. The evil tribes, however, covet spelljamming technology. If they had spelljamming vessels, they believe, they'd have a major advantage over their enemies. Plus, they wouldn't be bound to a single world, and could spread their evil throughout the universe. The good giants and the dragons are careful to do what they can to prevent the evil giants from ever acquiring spelljamming capabilities.

Adventure Hooks

- Several wyverns attack the PCs' vessel, forcing them to fight the winged creatures off. The PCs are then faced with an "inquisition" by silver dragons, who aren't at all sure that the visitors' aggression towards the wyverns was warranted...
- The PCs' vessel is visited by a levitating cloud giant who claims to be a representative from a good-aligned tribe, and who invites them to join his people for a major feast of welcome. Of course, things aren't what they seem: the giant's tribe is actually evil, and wants nothing more than to get its collective hands on the PCs' ship.
- A group of evil cloud giants tries to coopt the PCs' ship to assist in an attack on a neighboring good giants' cloud island.
- A group of undead, under the command of a skeleton warrior, has somehow acquired a semi-solid cloud island, and is using it like a pirate vessel to attack other islands...and anything else that gets in their way. The PCs themselves may come under attack, or they may be asked to help a small group of giants or dragons fight off the undead marauders.
- A PC or significant NPC has been captured by evil cloud giants. The giants are holding him or her hostage. In return for the person's life, they want the PCs to assist them in an attack on a group of good giants or dragons.
- Relations are strained between a tribe of storm giants and a family of silver dragons over the alignment issue: both groups are more stubborn than usual about the ethical slant of their goodness. The PCs have been dealing with one or both of the groups, and are caught right in the middle.

6 - Unusual or "Non-Standard" Worlds

Introduction

The majority of worlds in the universe are "standard" worlds of one type or another: roughly spherical, rotating about a central axis and orbiting a primary in an orderly manner. But not all worlds are like this, by any means. The universe is big – big enough to encompass worlds strange enough to stretch the sanity of even the most seasoned adventurer.

There is but one thing that the worlds in this section have in common: They have virtually nothing in common.

Nivil

Overall Data

Nivil is a "ring planet": a narrow, thin strip of rock and metal that forms a complete ring around its primary. Nivil is a strip approximately 50,000 miles wide and about one mile thick. It encircles its sun at a distance (radius) of about 45 million miles, which means the ring is 283 million miles long. This gives the ring planet a surface area – on its inner face alone – of more than 14 trillion square miles. When viewed from space, Nivil looks like a ring of slender blue ribbon looped around its star. This apparent slenderness seems to blind most people to the immense amount of room on the ring planet. For comparison, Toril has a surface area of about 177 million square miles. This means that the surface area of Nivil is almost 100,000 times that of Toril. This immense scale has significant effects on virtually every facet of the world of Nivil.

Unlike virtually all other worlds, Nivil has no gravity – none. The ring planet rotates rapidly around its primary however – at its surface, the rate equates to about 700 miles per second – and the centrifugal force generated by this rapid rotation has an effect equivalent to earth-normal gravity.

The thin ribbon that is Nivil is composed of metal intermixed with hard igneous rocks such as basalt and granite. The laws of physics would imply that the stresses on a band of rock and metal only one mile thick, spinning at 700 miles per second, would instantly tear the band into fragments and spray them outward from the sun. The fact that this hasn't happened – and seems to be in absolutely no danger of happening – implies either that the laws of physics don't apply to Nivil, or that powerful magic is somehow involved.

Nivil has a breathable atmosphere approximately 50 miles thick. This atmosphere is kept confined by a continuous shield wall of mountains 75 miles tall around both margins of the ring.

The fact that Nivil has no gravity other than the "artificial gravity" created by centrifugal force has one interesting consequence: It's possible to fall off the ring world! Theoretically, one could climb the 75-mile height of the shield wall mountains, and step off into space. Once clear

of the ring, the unfortunate mountain climber would "fall" free into space – directly outward from the sun at 700 miles per second, or 42,000 miles per hour!

Because the entire inner surface of the ring planet faces the sun, there is no day or night on Nivil: the habitable surface is always sunlit. Neither are there any seasons. Nivil is perfectly circular, and its center and the center of its primary are identical. Thus, every portion of Nivil is always exactly the same distance from the sun, and sunlight always strikes its surface perpendicularly. To someone on the surface, this means that the sun is always directly overhead, and that it is always high noon everywhere on Nivil.

The inner surface of Nivil has a topography similar to that of any standard world. There are mountains, valleys, seas and lakes. The tallest mountains are about 45,000 feet high, while the deepest oceans are only about 500 feet deep.

The outer surface of Nivil – the one facing away from the sun – is almost perfectly smooth. It has no atmosphere, and is always dark. No loose object can remain on the outer surface. The ring's rapid spin would immediately hurl it into space. The only way anyone can explore the outer surface would be from a spelljamming vessel. This vessel would have to maintain the same speed as the ring itself – 700 miles per second – and keep itself in a perfectly circular course. According to what is currently known about spelljamming, this would be impossible: while full spelljamming speed is certainly fast enough, there's no way that a vessel could remain at full speed close enough to the surface for observation. The mass of the ring is more than enough to cause any vessel to drop to tactical speed. Thus the outer surface is totally unexplored and unknown, and probably will remain so forever.

Nivil is not volcanically or tectonically active. The continents do not "drift," and there are no volcanoes or other signs of volcanic activity (hot springs, etc.). Neither are there ever any earthquakes.

Nobody knows how Nivil came to exist. There are some sages who claim it was created by an ancient race – mortal, albeit with almost god-like powers – who vanished from the universe millions of years ago; perhaps this was the same race which engineered the "ribbon world" of Radole. Others believe the ring planet was created by the deities of the crystal sphere in which it exists. It seems very unlikely that anyone will ever learn the answer to this problem.

Climate and Weather

The entire surface of Nivil is very hospitable to normal forms of life. At "sea level," the air temperature hovers around a balmy 75° F. This temperature decreases with increasing altitude, at a rate of about 3° F per thousand feet of increased elevation. Thus, the temperature atop a 10,000 foot mountain would be about 45° F. Atop the tallest mountain, the air temperature would be about -60° F. The

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highest peaks are capped with snow, although snow never falls at the lower elevations.

The winds on Nivil are similar in strength to those on a terrestrial world. [Use the “Summer” column on the Weather Conditions table on the inside cover.] The only significant difference is that circular storms like tornadoes and hurricanes can’t occur on Nivil (since they depend on the Coriolis force, which is missing on a ring planet). The winds can reach hurricane strength, but they always travel in straight lines.

Cloud cover on Nivil is similar to that on standard worlds. Some regions of the ring planet will have blue skies, while others may be under partial or complete cloud cover. Precipitation is relatively common [1 chance in 6 in any 24-hour period], and the nature of the precipitation depends on the air temperature. (Thus, at “sea level,” precipitation always means rain.)

Appearance from Space

From a great distance, Nivil looks like a fine blue ribbon forming a great circle around the sun. From closer in, the surface of the ring planet appears much like that of any standard earth world: blues, greens and browns, overlaid with white streaks of clouds.

Continents

There are many oceans on Nivil, some of them immensely larger than could exist on a standard world. These oceans divide the land area into literally thousands of continents. As with the oceans, some of these continents are considerably greater in area than the entire surface of some worlds.

There are ten oceans that have come to be called “global oceans.” These are roughly circular, and are about 45,000 miles in diameter – almost the entire width of the ring planet. Each of these oceans has a clustering of continents near its center.

Life Forms

Purely from a point of view of size, Nivil should theoretically be able to support many different, virtually independent ecosystems. And, as it turns out, that’s exactly how the planet works. There are uncountable distinct ecologies spread over the vast surface area of Nivil.

The clusters of continents within the ten “global oceans” have the most distinct ecologies. This is simply because the great distances between these continents and the next land masses are so great: often more than 20,000 miles, much more than most birds can fly. Distance alone isolates these ecologies, allowing them to develop along their own lines with very little interference.

The different ecologies of Nivil all seem to follow somewhat terrestrial lines. The ring planet is home to

virtually every known species – flora and fauna – that finds itself at home in temperate conditions. This includes normal animals and plants, demihumans, humanoids and most “monsters.” The only creatures that seem to be missing – and the size of the ring planet makes it virtually impossible to be certain of this – are those that must dwell underground, those that operate on a different chemical economy (e.g., storopers, magmen, etc.) and those creatures that have a connection with another plane of existence (e.g., salamanders, water weirds, etc.). There also seem to be no undead.

These creatures form interlocking ecologies, and there is enough space on Nivil for most viable combinations to be tried through blind chance. On one continent or group of continents, it’s possible to find an ecology very much like that on Toril; on another, an ecology almost indistinguishable from that on Oerth. If an explorer looks far enough, it should be possible to find a spot on Nivil that supports virtually any other ecosystem that the explorer’s interested in. (Of course, totally exploring the surface of Nivil would take several thousand life-times for even the most long-lived creature.)

Perhaps the biggest question about Nivil – after the question of its origin, of course – is, “how did all the creatures get there?” The only places in the known universe – apart from Nivil itself – where Krynnish kender rub shoulders with Oerthish Greyhawk dragons are those where the species were transplanted via spelljamming vessels. This leads many sages to claim that Nivil was “populated” by a race that possessed spelljamming capabilities: perhaps the creators of Nivil and the engineers of Radole. Again, as with the origin question, there seems to be no way to get a definitive answer.

The intelligent races on Nivil have no insight to offer. The records of even the most long-lived creatures go back only 20,000 years or so, and none of these records describe any form of “spacegoing immigration” of new creatures. What this means is that, if Nivil was “settled,” the settlement must have been complete by 20,000 years ago. The sentient races have their usual panoply of creation stories describing their own origins (evolution, special creation by deities, etc.), but these are no different from such myths anywhere else in the universe, so researchers give them very little credence.

Guide to the Groundlings

Nivil is home to virtually every sentient race in known space except for those that are undead, extraplanar or exclusively subterranean. There are dragons and giants of all varieties, humanoids, demihumans, etc., etc., etc. Nivil is such a big place that incompatible species are generally able to find a “homeland” of their own – a place where they’re at least partially removed from the races that most want to eat them. If one had enough time – several lifetimes at least – to spend in the search, one could find just about

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any intelligent race living in a stable society somewhere on Nivil.

Knowledge of and interest in spelljamming varies from race to race, and from region to region of Nivil. For example, there are many human civilizations on Nivil that have no conception of spelljamming, while there's one advanced human culture – the Alanti – who use a limited form of spelljamming to travel around the ring planet.

The Alanti are a sub-race of humans native to a large continent in one of Nivil's "global oceans." They call this continent Alanta. The Alanti are a tall, slender race, with smooth skin that's a rich brown in color. Their facial features are broad, and their hair – which is usually black or dark copper-red in color – is straight and most often worn at least shoulder-length. The Alanti's native language is a tongue totally unrelated to any other human tongue heard in the universe. Most members of the culture also speak the alignment tongue of lawful good, and some few speak a "pidgin" form of Common.

The Alanti are highly intelligent, and have raised their culture to a very high level – judging on moral and ethical grounds, as well as by standard of living. Alanti culture is well organized to protect and enhance the quality of life of every living thing. [In other words, the culture is Lawful Good in alignment, as are the vast majority of individual Alanti.] The culture operates under a well-thought-out body of laws, but – unlike many cultures elsewhere – these laws aren't oppressive in any way, and virtually every Alanti individual gladly accepts the laws' authority over him or

her. [Translation: While lawful, the Alanti aren't obsessive about it.]

The Alanti are ruled by a "constitutional monarch" – a hereditary position that's largely figurehead, much like the monarch of England on Earth. The hereditary king or queen is considered the embodiment of the country of Alanta: a person to whom citizens can feel personal loyalty. The actual business of government is conducted by an elected parliament. While the hereditary monarch has the right to veto any decision of parliament, this power is rarely used – mainly because the decisions of parliament are almost always good ones. The Alanti are almost unique in the universe in that they've got a system of government that actually works the way it was intended to.

Alanti culture is greatly dependent on a high level of magical activity. Perhaps one Alanti out of twenty is a mage, and magic is used extensively to support the culture's high standard of living. The Alanti worship a single deity they call Unus, a unitary principle that includes all seemingly-contradictory elements: male and female, good and evil, right and wrong, etc. There are few priests in the society, but those that do exist are powerful individuals, highly respected by everyone else.

A few decades ago, several Arcane visited Nivil. (Nobody knows why, although some people believe the ring planet scares them because it might represent an artifact created by a race orders of magnitude more powerful than themselves.) The Arcane went directly to Alanta, as the most "enlightened" source of information... and the best



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potential market. The Alanti acquired several dozen spelljamming helms – mainly minor helms – from the Arcane, and installed them in small ships. The Alanti use these ships to explore other regions of Nivil. Perhaps surprisingly, it seems that the Alanti have never used their ships to leave the ring planet. This may be because they fear the (actually non-existent) difficulties of transition to and from a world whose surface moves at 700 miles per second, or it may simply be because Nivil is plenty big enough to keep them busy for centuries without looking elsewhere.

The “skyships” of the Alanti are common sights in the skies of lands near to Alanta, and Alanti expeditions are heading farther and farther afield. The Alanti have an avowed intention to extend the benefits of their enlightened culture to as much of the ring planet as they possibly can. They aren’t a warlike race, however, and so can’t extend their domain by conquest. Instead, they simply demonstrate the advantages of their society, and wait for others to join their “commonwealth” voluntarily. There are certain societies nearby that would dearly love to conquer Alanta, but fear of the Alanti’s magical powers stays these societies’ hands.

The Alanti welcome visitors from other worlds, as long as such visitors aren’t seen as disruptive or evil influences. If this is the case, the visitors will be encouraged to leave. The Alanti will use force only as a last resort, if reason totally fails.

Other Comments

Landing a spelljamming vessel on Nivil would seem to be impossible. After all, the speed of any given point on the surface is about 700 miles per second, much greater than the tactical speed of any ship. As things turn out, however, a quirk of nature makes it quite easy to land. The technique is as follows: at full spelljamming speed, the vessel approaches the inner surface of the ring, and positions itself directly over where its captain wants it to land. It then drops into the atmosphere of the ring planet. At the instant that it enters the atmosphere – at an altitude of 50 miles above the surface – the craft drops back to tactical speed. However, the vessel keeps the same velocity as the ring planet itself. The ship is now motionless with relation to the surface and to the atmosphere. It can now maneuver within the atmosphere at standard atmospheric speeds.

Leaving Nivil is similar. As soon as the ship climbs above the atmosphere, it immediately accelerates to spelljamming velocity sufficient to match the rotational speed of the ring. In both directions, this shift happens without the helmsman being fully aware of what’s happening. There is no risk involved in either maneuver.

The only problem arises in the case of an unpowered object – such as a character or a wrecked ship – falling into the atmosphere of Nivil. With respect to a free-falling body, the atmosphere of Nivil is travelling at 700 miles per

second. The body suffers terrible damage from air friction: 30d6 points of hull damage per round, or ten times that number of hit points (30d6 x 10). Obviously, virtually any creature that falls freely into the atmosphere of Nivil will be killed instantly.

Note that navigation on Nivil is largely a matter of convention. There is no magnetic field, so compass navigation is impossible. The sun doesn’t move, and the stars are never visible, so standard forms of solar or celestial navigation are impossible. The most commonly-used convention uses the terms “spinward,” “anti-spinward,” “port” and “starboard.” “Spinward” is the direction along the length of the ribbon that corresponds to the ring planet’s direction of rotation; “anti-spinward” is the opposite direction. When one faces spinward, “port” is to the left – across the ring planet – while “starboard” is to the right. It is very easy to get lost on Nivil.

Adventure Hooks

- The PCs approach the planet’s surface, and see an Alanti skyship trying vainly to fight off an attack by one or more evil dragons. Without help, the skyship will certainly be destroyed. Saving the skyship will earn the PCs the gratitude of the crew, and an invitation to visit Alanta as honored guests.
- An evil-based society – maybe demihumans, maybe humanoids – believes that the only thing that makes Alanta invincible is the fact that the Alanti are the only ones with skyships. This society will do anything they can to capture a skyship – or the PCs’ vessel – so they can try to replicate the spelljamming helm. The PCs must defend their ship, or struggle to regain it.
- Through magical means, the Alanti have received a message from a civilization on the other side of the ring planet, some 140 million miles away. It would take virtually forever for a normal skyship to make this journey if it followed the arc of Nivil’s ring. The only logical way of reaching this other civilization is to leave the ring planet, cross the intervening space past the sun at full spelljamming speed, and re-enter the atmosphere at the appropriate place. But the Alanti are unable to do so. Instead, they ask the PCs for help: Would the Honored Visitors deliver a message to this distant civilization? (The DM is free to decide just what this message might be, and exactly who – or what – is awaiting it on the other side of the world.)
- The ring planet is unstable! Nivil has started to “wobble” as it spins around the sun. Earthquakes are rocking the surface. The Alanti have legends that describe a magical artifact of great power that is intended to prevent this instability from happening. Someone must have somehow “turned off” this artifact. The Alanti beg the PCs to help them on a great quest: to find this artifact, and re-activate it before the ring planet is destroyed!

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Torus

Overall Data

As its name implies, Torus is toroidal in shape. That is, it is a cylinder that curves in on itself, with its two ends joined: a gigantic "donut" of rock. The entire planet has an outer diameter of 30,000 miles. The "hole" of the donut has a diameter of 20,000 miles. The solid portion of the planet has a circular cross-section, 5,000 miles in diameter. The surface area of Torus is approximately 240 million (2.4 x 10⁸) square miles. For comparison, the surface area of Toril is about 177 million square miles.

Torus has two axes of rotation. It spins around a point at the exact center of the "donut's hole." It also "tumbles" around an axis that runs right through the donut. (Thus it rotates like a coin that's been flipped.) This "axis of tumble" is perpendicular to the line connecting Torus with its sun. What this means is that an observer near Torus's sun would see the planet either as a circular ring (when it's face-on to the sun) or as a narrow rectangle with curved ends (when it's edge-on to the sun). The rate of spin is relatively slow: It takes Torus 200 days to complete a single rotation. It's the tumble that gives Torus its day: A single tumble takes 30 hours.

Torus has a breathable atmosphere that extends 50 miles up from its surface. This means that most of the planet's central "hole" is the vacuum of Wildspace. The entire surface of the planet is habitable. The planet's gravitation extends only to the top of the atmosphere; thus the "hole" itself has no gravity.

The view from the surface of Torus varies wildly depending on just where on the planet the observer is. For someone standing on the "outer" surface of Torus – that is, on the side of the planet away from the hole – the view is similar to that from any standard world. For someone on the inside surface, however, the view is different and very spectacular. The opposite arc of the planet's inner surface is visible as a massive arch across the sky. This "arch" is 5,000 miles wide, and 20,000 miles away, which means it would subtend an arc of about 14°. Thus, the "arch" fills about one-tenth of the sky. When the opposite portion of the planet's inner surface is sunlit, it appears as a blue-green arch, dappled with white clouds; when it's in darkness, it appears as a great dark strip occulting the stars.

The outer surfaces of Torus have normal days and nights. The inner surfaces have two nights and two days in each 24 hour period. An observer experiences "primary night" when his location is facing away from the sun. "Secondary night" happens around noon, when the opposite arc of the planet – "the arch" – blocks the sun. "Secondary night" is about 3 hours long.

Torus also has seasons, but these result from the planet's spin, not from its orbit around the sun. A year, or a cycle of

four seasons, lasts 200 days on Torus. Thus, each season is approximately 50 days long.

Torus is a very strange world, and it often takes visitors many days to get used to its pattern of days and seasons. Almost every explorer who visits the inner surface initially feels some irrational fear at seeing "the arch" overhead. (Perhaps it's an instinctive fear that this huge arc will fall on them.) While most people get over this in a matter of days, some people never manage to shake their fear.

Torus is completely stable in terms of both rotations and its orbit around the sun. (This means there are no disconcerting "wobbles.") The planet is solid rock right the way through; it has no semi-molten mantle or liquid core. Thus there is no volcanic or tectonic activity, and no earthquakes.

Apparently this wasn't always the case. Torus has many rugged mountain ranges, which indicate that there was geological activity in the past. The tallest mountain peaks are 30,000 feet or so; the deepest oceans are maybe 15,000 feet in depth.

Climate and Weather

The weather patterns on Torus should, logically, be very complex. The fact that they're not implies that some magical laws – as well as the standard physical ones – are operating on the planet.

At sea level, the daytime temperature everywhere on the planet is around 70° F. This remains constant no matter what the season. At night, the temperature drops to about 40°. (On the inner surface, this refers to "primary night" only. "Secondary night" is too short for the temperature to drop more than about 15°.) As on most worlds, temperature decreases with increasing altitude. For each 1,000 feet of increased elevation, the average temperature drops by about 3°. (This means that the daytime temperature atop the tallest mountain would be about -20° F, dropping to a frigid -50° at night.) Most tall mountains are topped with ice and snow, although snow never falls on the lowlands.

Precipitation is about as common on Torus as it is on most standard worlds. [Each day, there is a 1 in 6 chance of precipitation in summer and winter, increasing to 2 in 6 in spring and fall.] The type of precipitation depends mainly on the altitude. At sea level, precipitation always means rain. Winds are highly variable, and vary by the season. Storms are not uncommon. [Use the Weather Conditions table on the inside cover.] Cloud cover is very similar to that on any standard terrestrial world, ranging from zero, to 100% during rainstorms. Lightning is uncommon except during the biggest storms, and then the electrical displays are impressive. Explorers report that one of the most spectacular views on Torus is of a lightning storm strobing through the skies on "the arch."

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Appearance from Space

The toroidal shape of Torus is immediately obvious. The planet is the typical blue-green of most habitable worlds, streaked with grey-white clouds. Cloud patterns are usually radial – in other words, they wrap around the shorter circumference of the torus.

Continents

Torus has several large oceans, including one that extends, completely unbroken, latitudinally around the planet. This great body of water – the Cylindrical Sea – is nearly 4,000 miles wide. There are some islands in this sea, but not many, and the largest is only 200 miles or so along its largest dimension.

There are three particularly large oceans, each with an island continent roughly in the midst of it. These land masses are known as Davin, Telaria and Wysdon. There are also several smaller oceans and seas.

Torus has no magnetic field, so compass navigation is impossible. The planet’s two axes of rotation make celestial navigation extremely complex. The problem of navigation is simpler on the inner surfaces, since the arch is always visible in the sky to provide orientation.

Life Forms

Plant life is very profuse and varied on Torus, ranging from simple mosses and lichens to huge deciduous trees with great spreading branches. Some of these monstrous baobabs are 500 feet tall, with leaves up to 10 feet long and half that wide. In some areas, the baobabs grow so close together that their branches intermesh. Beneath these trees, very little sunlight reaches the ground. The branches sometimes interlock tightly enough to great platforms of wood and foliage, solid enough to support animals up to 100 pounds or more in weight. In these great baobab forests, animal life generally concentrates in the trees themselves, eschewing the shadowy ground beneath. There are some predatory creatures who make their homes on the ground, then climb into the trees to hunt for food. The most common – and dangerous – form is a six-legged creature similar to an oversized giant rat. [These creatures are similar to standard giant rats with maximum hit points and a +1 bonus to hit because of ferocity.] There are no evergreen trees on Torus.

Baobab forests are rare, except on some islands that are almost totally overgrown with them. In most regions, the lowlands are savannah-like grasslands: rolling plains covered with 5'-high grasses and grain plants.

Surprisingly, there are very few flying creatures on Torus. There are no birds as such, but there are several species of large insects. The largest is a kind of giant hornet growing up to 6 feet long, with a wingspan of almost 10 feet. Luckily, these dangerous predators are very rare.

All creatures on Torus are either mammals or insects; there are no fish, reptiles or amphibians. There are creatures adapted to every environment on the planet, including the sea, and filling every ecological niche. The oceans are home to mammalian species ranging in size from creatures like seals to great carnivorous whales. These whales differ from their terrestrial counterparts only in that they have pelts of soft fur like those of otters. The Cylindrical Sea is also home to small populations of selkies (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 1; AC 5; MV 12 Sw 36; HD 3+3; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon or 1-6; SD can change into human form AL N(G)) and sea lions (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 5/3; MV Sw 18; HD 6; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-12; SA mauling; AL N).

The rolling grasslands are home to many species similar to deer, and even larger creatures similar to terrestrial buffalo or bison. The only sentient land animals native to Torus are a race of centaurs (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 1; AC 5 (4); MV 18; HD 4; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6 and weapon; AL N). These are described in the following section.

Guide to the Groundling

As mentioned above, the rolling plains of Torus are home to many centaurs, but centaurs different in some significant ways from the creatures with which adventurers might be familiar. Instead of reclusive dwellers in untouched sylvan regions, the centaurs of Torus are much more social.

Family groups join together to form great tribes, and many of these tribes have confederated to form nations. Tribes and nations vary in behavior and outlook. Some are warlike, raiding neighboring tribes for slaves or food, to prove their courage, or sometimes (seemingly) just for the fun of it. Others are very peaceable and cooperative. All live in close harmony with the land, however. Some few tribes practice limited agriculture, but most live nomadic lives, following the herd animals that make up much of their diet.

Some centaurs become tribal spellcasters – dual-class wizard/priests. These individuals are highly respected by their tribes, and this respect often extends to other tribes. Even the most warlike group is unlikely to attack one who is known to be a tribal spellcaster. The deities the centaurs worship are the deities of the land: storm gods, bison gods, grain gods, river gods, and the like. They also highly revere their ancestors, although this reverence doesn’t cross the line into true worship. They are also ever-mindful of the traditions of their band, tribe or nation.

The welcome that a visitor to Torus might expect varies widely. Some groups of centaurs are friendly and trusting, welcoming the opportunity to speak with and learn from strangers. Others will attack and kill strangers on sight. Even the most friendly group can turn nasty, however, if they come to believe that the visitors will somehow damage or disrupt their way of life.

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Some centaurs understand the rudiments of spelljamming, and know something about cosmology. They have absolutely no interest in leaving their homes, however. The gods have decreed that space travel is not for the centaurs, they believe, although other races are free to practice it without fear of breaking centaur tribal taboos.

The coasts of the Cylindrical Sea are dotted with human settlements as well. These humans came to the planet some decades ago as part of a very small migration from a planet named Synex which was undergoing major climatic upheavals. The humans now living on Torus were supposed to be only the first wave of a major settlement, but Synex blew itself to fragments long before the migration could proceed to any great degree. The settlers on Torus are now stranded: The ships that brought them here turned back to Synex to pick up the next wave of settlers, and never returned.

Expecting to be backed up with more waves of immigrants, the original settlers treated the centaurs as obstacles to be overcome in the most efficient manner, and earned the enmity of many tribes and nations. When it became obvious that more waves of settlers wouldn't be coming, the original human pioneers realized that their initial approach had got them into a lot of trouble. They've spent the last thirty or so years trying to smooth things over with the centaur tribes near to their coastal homes. They've had only marginal success with this: The centaurs have very long memories, and are very good at holding grudges.

For this reason, the humans have looked to the seas rather than to the inland regions. The centaurs have an innate fear of the oceans, and the humans have come to depend on this to partially protect them. They've built up fishing towns, and their great fishing fleets set sail each morning onto the Cylindrical Sea to net or spear the small seal-like creatures that make up most of the humans' diet.

Although more than a generation has passed since the pioneers arrived, their stories and tales have kept knowledge of spelljamming alive. Many of the humans dream of a day when spelljamming ships will return to take them from Torus to another world. Some, however, have decided that they like Torus. These are the people who've had the most success in befriendng the centaurs and earning their trust. To these humans, Torus is home, and they have no interest in leaving.

The human settlers have split into several groups – considering their small population, “nations” is much too grand a word. These groups compete financially and by proving their efficiency as fishermen. The groups have not yet come into armed conflict, but many cynics think that warfare is just a matter of time. Several of these groups still seem to consider the centaurs as “savages” to be eradicated. There are thus ongoing “centaur wars” between these groups of humans and the planet's original natives. These wars poison the attitudes of other centaur tribes, those not actually involved in the wars, and those human groups that aren't warlike are finding it ever more difficult to

win the trust of the native tribes. The warlike human groups look on others as “centaur-lovers” and revile them for it.

Other Comments

The matter of seasons on Torus is actually more complex than was described earlier. As the planet both spins and tumbles, there are regions and times of year where the sun is always above the horizon, or always directly on it. DMs who are interested in making their seasons a little more “realistic” are invited to do so. The best way to figure out the seasons is to take a torus – such as a donut – and shine a bright light on it to represent the sun, then both spin and tumble it, watching the play of light and shadow across its surface.

Adventure Hooks

- The PCs land in the middle of a “centaur war.” They must make a decision: Do they support the humans against the “savages,” or support the centaurs against the xenophobic – and potentially genocidal – settlers?
- The PCs encounter a tribe of centaurs. While this tribe isn't actively hostile towards demihumans, they certainly don't trust the bipedal creatures after the tales they've heard of the “centaur wars.” Can the PCs earn their trust, or will they come into conflict with the lion centaurs?
- While the PCs are exploring the planet, they see a young centaur trying vainly to fight off one or more giant hornets. Without help, the centaur will surely die. If the PCs rescue him or her, the young centaur will introduce them to the tribe.
- The PCs have become friends with a small tribe of peaceful centaurs. Unfortunately, a neighboring tribe is very warlike, and is planning a major attack on the PCs' friends. If the PCs don't help out, the friendly tribe will be slaughtered.
- The PCs land in a human settlement full of people who want to leave Torus. The rulers of the town see the PCs' ship as a perfect way to get off this “gods-forsaken hole.” The problem is, the PCs probably won't be too eager to hand over their ship...
- A warlike tribe of centaurs has moved into a coastal region, and now threatens a peaceful human settlement. If the PCs don't get involved, the humans will be slaughtered. Will the PCs help the humans defend their homes, or can they find a way to avoid warfare altogether?

Plata

Overall Data

Plata is a disk world: perfectly circular, 8,000 miles in diameter, and 50 miles thick. Its surface area is about 50 million square miles, about one-third the surface area of Toril.

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There are other disk worlds in the universe, but so far Plata appears to be unique: It has a unidirectional gravitational field. In other words, it has gravity only on one surface. The “underside” of Plata has no gravity and no atmosphere, and is completely uninhabitable. The breathable atmosphere of Plata forms a perfect hemisphere, extending 4,050 miles out from the center of the disk. Thus, over the center of the planet the atmosphere is 4,050 miles deep, but it extends only 50 miles out from the circumference of the disk. The atmosphere ends at the gravitational plane of the planet. Theoretically, since Plata has no gravity whatsoever on its underside, the atmosphere should quickly leak away into space. It doesn't, however, and nobody has a reasonable theory as to why.

It is possible to fall off the edge of Plata. Any object or creature which falls over the edge drops to the gravity plane and remains there. There is a gentle force that pushes such an object outward along the gravity plane. When it reaches the edge of the atmosphere envelope, 50 miles out from the edge of the disk, the object falls free into the vacuum of Wildspace.

Plata rotates about an axis that extends longitudinally through its disk. That is, it rotates in the same way as a tossed coin. This rotational axis is perfectly perpendicular to the line connecting the planet's center to its primary. One rotation lasts 24 hours, so a day on Plata is exactly 12 hours long. When observed from a position near its sun, it ranges in appearance from a circular disc to a thin, virtually invisible line. The inhabitants of a planet that orbits closer to the sun than does Plata call the disk world “the Eye,” since it appears to blink every 12 hours. Plata has no seasons, and the length of its day never changes.

The habitable surface of Plata is similar to that of most terrestrial planets, with mountains and oceans. There are no oceans or lakes within 5 miles of the edge of the disk. (Luckily, since water would flow over the edge, spread along the gravity plane and eventually spew off into space.) Its highest mountains are about 25,000 feet tall, and its deepest oceans are 30,000 feet deep. Many of the taller mountain ranges are riddled with extensive cave and cavern networks. The underside of the disk is rough and mountainous, with no bodies of water.

Plata is volcanically and tectonically dead, and there is evidence that it always was so. The existence of its mountains is a puzzle, since mountain-building is normally a consequence of geological activity. The disk world has no volcanoes, hot springs, etc., and never suffers from earthquakes.

Climate and Weather

Plata is a relatively cold world. The average daytime air temperature is 50° F, dropping to about 30° at night. This temperature drops with increasing altitude at a rate of about 4° per 1,000 feet of elevation. Thus, atop the tallest mountain, the temperate ranges from about -50° F during

the day to a deadly -70° at night. Most mountains are covered with ice and snow.

The temperature of Plata's oceans varies quite widely, and nobody knows exactly why. While there are some bodies of water that stay at around 40° F, day and night, there are some that are a good 10° colder than that, and are always covered with a layer of ice.

Precipitation is common on Plata. [On any given day, there is 1 chance in 4 of precipitation.] During the day at sea level, precipitation is usually cold rain, while at night, snow is common. On the mountains, snow is the rule. Cloud cover is rarely less than 50%, and increases to 100% during precipitation. Storms are only rarely accompanied by lightning.

Winds are much more common, and stronger, near the center of the disk. [For regions within 1,000 miles of the edge of the disk, use the “Summer” column of Weather Conditions table on the inside cover. Elsewhere, use the “Winter” column.]

Appearance from Space

The habitable surface of Plata is generally grey-green, covered with extensive clouds of dirty grey. The underside is unrelieved dark grey – the color of the native rock – and shows very little detail.

Continents

Most of Plata's surface is dry land. The massive, world-girdling continent that makes up the edge of the disk is called Circulus by the natives. There are other land masses and continents that bear various names depending on the race and nationality of the speaker. There is a great central ocean – roughly circular and about 1,000 miles in diameter – that is commonly called Braiemor. In the middle of this ocean, at the exact geometrical center of the disk world, is an island continent called Barrakis. The mountains of Barrakis are the tallest on the world.

Life Forms

The cold upper surface of Plata is home to many diverse species of plant life, ranging from simple mosses and lichens to extensive networks of motile vines known to explorers as “stranglers” (see the Appendix for details). The plants of Plata share one characteristic: none grow to any height greater than about 6 feet. Most are ground-hugging, spreading widely along the surface to maximize the surface area they can expose to sunlight. This is presumably an adaptation to the extensive cloud coverage on Plata. There are many forms of aquatic plants, ranging from species similar to kelp, to seaweed which form great, spreading mats on the surface of un-frozen oceans. The shallows are also home to an aquatic species of stranglers.

There are few forms of animal life adapted to the ocean,

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making some sages claim that the progression of evolution on Plata was the reverse of that on most worlds: land-dwelling life first, followed by an adaptation to the oceans. There are no fish as such. All aquatic animals are quadrupedal, showing much similarity to their land-dwelling brethren. There are no large animals in the seas of Plata. The largest, which is the size of a medium dog, resembles nothing more than a large rat with longitudinal gill slits along its back [use the statistics for a giant rat, but with a swimming speed of 15]. Although a single individual of this species isn't overly dangerous to something man-sized, "sea rats" are rarely encountered singly. Instead, they hunt in packs of 20 or more, and are exceptionally dangerous to anyone foolish enough to enter the water.

The most common form of land-dwelling animal is a "sea rat" without the gills and with a thick, shaggy coat [again, use the statistics for a standard giant rat]. Like their aquatic cousins, these creatures are dangerous predators, and travel and hunt in large packs. There are no reptiles, amphibians or insects on Plata. All animals are mammals, or biologically close enough that the difference matters only to sages. There are few large land creatures, although explorers have come back with stories – possibly fanciful – of shaggy rats the size of bears. There are no non-sentient creatures on Plata that are adapted to life in the air: no birds, not even any creatures adapted to gliding.

There is only one sentient species that is generally accepted as native to Plata. These are avian humanoids virtually indistinguishable from aarakocra (*Monstrous Compendium*, Vol. 2; AC 7; MV 6 FI 36; HD 1+2; THACO 18; #AT 2; Dmg 1-3/1-3 or 2-8 (weapon); AL NG). These creatures are discussed in the following section.

The aarakocra aren't the only sentient creatures to be found on Plata, however. The disk world is also home to various species of humanoids – orcs and goblins, mainly, but with some kobolds, flinds, bugbears and gnolls mixed in for good measure – who live mainly in the caves that riddle Plata's mountain ranges. Again, these creatures are discussed in the next section.

Guide to the Groundlings

The most important sentient species on Plata is, without a doubt, the aarakocra – or, as they call themselves, the *Chilterik* ("the People"). The Chilterik are organized into small family bands of 10 to 30 members, each band claiming a hunting territory of about 10,000 square miles (i.e., a circular area about 56 miles in radius). Members of one band will very rarely enter the territory of another band, and then only when invited, or when circumstances make it imperative. Different bands are on friendly terms, and seem never to come into conflict. As the humanoid inhabitants of Plata found out to their detriment, however, bands will cooperate closely if conditions warrant.

The Chilterik have no central government, no conception of how one might work, and no desire to experiment with

the idea. Individual bands are led by the eldest female, who is often a tribal priest of level 1d4. Members of the band are free to follow the suggestions – "orders" would be too strong a word – of the leader, or not, as their own consciences dictate. As it works out, however, most members of the band will always obey the word of their leader. If individuals find themselves in disagreement with their leader, the most frequent response is to break away and find like-minded individuals to form their own band. There are no bad feelings on either side when such a schism happens, and the new band is always on very good terms with the older band that from which it sprang.

The Chilterik speak their own language. Some 10% of them have learned the Common tongue as the only way to interrogate the humanoid prisoners they occasionally take.

The aarakocra are safe from all the native life of Plata... as long as they're careful. They can swoop down on the biggest pack of rats with impunity, and pluck out their prey before the others can respond. Occasionally an unwary individual might wander within range of a strangler vine, but this is very rare. The greatest danger to the Chilterik are the various tribes of humanoids, who use bows and arrows to bring down the occasional aarakocra, and who sometimes attack their mountaintop eyries.

The Chilterik have a strong "racial memory" made up of stories and epic remember poems. These oral histories recall the arrival of the humanoids, and the sight of spelljamming ships in the skies of Plata. The aarakocra fear that any spelljamming vessel will contain more of their racial enemies. The bird-men's actual response to the arrival of a vessel will vary from band to band. Some – those who've suffered most from humanoid assault – might attack the ship on sight. Others might prefer to observe from afar to determine what the crew's intentions are. It's important to realize that virtually the only non-avian human-like beings the aarakocra have ever met are humanoids – enemies – and the bird-men are quite likely to respond based on this... regardless of their alignment.

If the crew members of an approaching vessel make it obvious that they're not callous killers like the humanoids, the aarakocra will accept them as friends, and try to make amends for any hostile action. The Chilterik will be friendly towards demihumans who treat them well, but will be confused and confounded by the fact that their new-found friends can't fly without use of magic or without their ship. [This can lead to some interesting NPC reactions. The abodes and behaviors of avian sentients will reflect their ability to fly. A PC who blindly obeys an aarakocra's suggestion to "follow me" might find that his host unwittingly leads him over a cliff...]

Even though they might come to accept that spelljamming ability belongs to species other than their natural enemies, the Chilterik will always feel some deep distrust of the technology. They will have no interest whatsoever in leaving their world and travelling among the stars.

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The humanoid races living on Plata aren't native to this world. During the Unhuman Wars, the humanoid forces decided to turn the disk world into a fortified stronghold. They landed with a great many soldiers, expecting to have no difficulty in subjugating the bird-men. As it turned out, the aarakocra were much more serious adversaries than the humanoids had expected, however. The humanoid armies were ill-equipped to fight a foe that could fly, and were quickly decimated.

As the Wars turned against the humanoids, the ships that were supposed to reinforce and resupply the bases on Plata were reassigned elsewhere... and eventually destroyed by the elves. The humanoids on Plata quickly had to accept that they'd been deserted. Many died – as much due to despair as to the harsh weather conditions and the continued attacks of the aarakocra – but those who survived learned to adapt to their new home. They quickly claimed the extensive cave complexes of the mountain ranges as theirs, and used them as shelter from the aerial attacks of the Chilterik.

Because it's their nature, the humanoids still dream of eradicating the aarakocra and claiming Plata as theirs alone. They continue to fight the bird-men, and over the generations they've become much better at it.

While the troops who initially landed on Plata were trained and disciplined veterans of the Wars (well, as disciplined as humanoids can get, at any rate), this quickly changed. The aarakocra were intelligent in their attacks, concentrating their efforts on those who were obviously humanoid commanders. With their command structure in ruins, the humanoid forces soon dissolved into autonomous tribes, most commonly divided along racial lines. For the first few decades, these tribes cooperated freely with each other, but that has changed recently. As humanoids are wont to do, they've been breeding rapidly, and the creatures are starting to feel population pressures. Since there are only so many caves, the obvious answer to a growing population is to wrest caverns away from other tribes. Thus the humanoids are becoming locked into continuous, ongoing warfare among themselves. This is taking a lot of pressure off the aarakocra, and the bird-men are quite happy to leave the humanoids to the task of killing each other.

Since the disappearance of their resupply vessels, the humanoids have heard no word from the greater universe. With no news to the contrary, they believe that the Unhuman Wars are still continuing. Furthermore, their general racial biases assure them that their forces must be winning. (Losing to the “dandelion-eaters” – the elves – is an idea they simply won't entertain.) Even while the humanoids tribes are fighting each other, they keep alive their “heritage” as members of the Unhuman armies.

About the only thing that could possibly stop the warfare between humanoids tribes is the arrival of demihumans – particularly elves – on Plata. They'll immediately forget their grudges, and cooperate in marching forth to obliterate the newly-arrived “elven expeditionary force.”

If the humanoids see a spelljamming vessel in the sky of Plata, their first assumption will be that it's a resupply ship for their “outpost.” Once they find this isn't the case, they'll do their best to acquire the ship for themselves. After all, with a ship, at least some of the “army” can leave this planet and rejoin the humanoid fleet to continue the glorious battle against the elves.

Explorers who've come to Plata in the past have tried to persuade the humanoids that the Unhuman Wars are over... and that they've lost. Predictably, the humanoids haven't accepted this news with open minds, and the “messengers” have generally been eaten for their efforts.

Adventure Hooks

- The PCs' ship is approached – or possibly assaulted – by aarakocra, who fear it's another vessel full of humanoids coming to attack them. Depending on how the PCs react, they can become trusted friends or hated enemies of the Chilterik.
 - The PCs land near a humanoid settlement. The humanoids immediately sally forth to destroy the “elven expeditionary force” and seize their ship.
 - The PCs blunder into the midst of a major battle between aarakocra and humanoids. Depending on how things develop, both sides in the conflict might suddenly try to assault them. (The aarakocra might see the ship as reinforcements for the humanoids, while the humanoids will see it as a way to get back into the Unhuman Wars.)
 - If one of the PCs is a half-orc, the humanoids might decide that the PC is either:
 - a prisoner of the other demihumans aboard the ship, and someone to be rescued; or,
 - the captain of a “prize vessel” captured in the Unhuman Wars, with a crew of prisoners.
- In either case, the PCs will have to do some fancy maneuvering to keep themselves out of trouble.

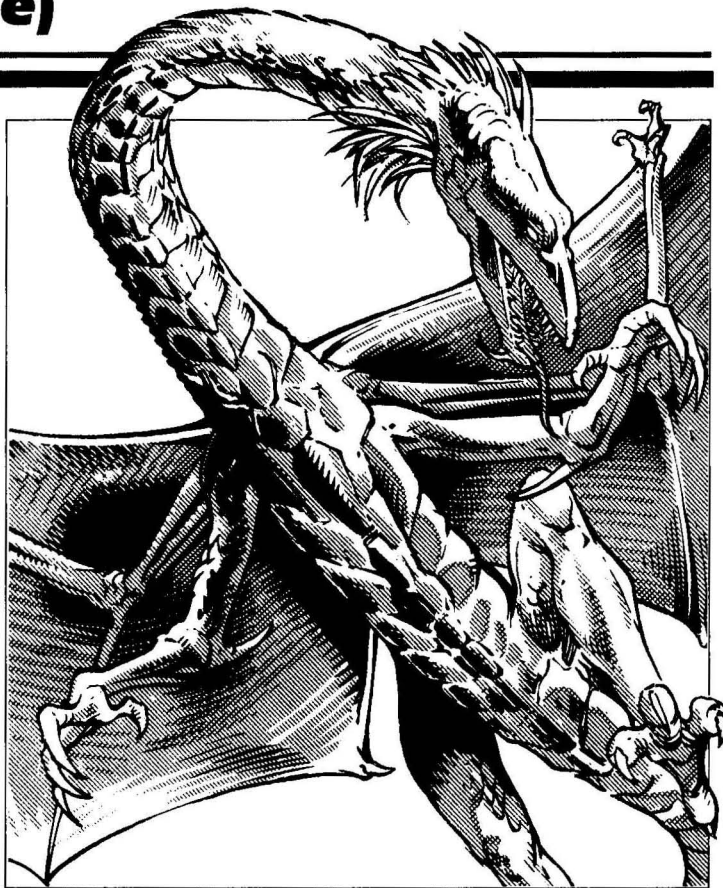
6 - Unusual or "Non-Standard" Worlds



Dragon, Mithril (Radole)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Exceptional (15-16)
TREASURE:	Special
ALIGNMENT:	Chaotic neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1 (2-3)
ARMOR CLASS:	0 (base)
MOVEMENT:	9, Fl 36 (B)
HIT DICE:	12 (base)
THACO:	9
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3 + special
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-6/1-6/3-12
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Special
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Variable
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Variable
SIZE:	G (40' base)
MORALE:	Fanatic (17 base)
XP VALUE:	Variable *



Mithril dragons are graceful, slender creatures with long necks – which accounts for much of their relatively great body length – and comparatively small heads. They have tiny eyes, which are protected from the extreme sunlight by semi-reflectant silver corneas. Their scales are highly reflectant, presumably to minimize heat absorption. Their color, from hatching to old age, remains a fine burnished silver, similar to the metal which gives them their name.

Mithril dragons have all of the standard dragon characteristics as described in the *Monstrous Compendium*. Unlike other dragons, however, they seem to have no interest in treasure as such. Their sole goal in life seems to be to enjoy themselves by soaring in the great thermals that rise from the semi-molten surface of Radole. In personality, they seem more akin to the faerie dragon than to any other draconic species.

Combat: Mithril dragons never seek out combat, unless it looks as though an enemy is going to harm their eggs or their mates. Normally, they use their incredible speed and maneuverability to stay well out of harm's way. (They're not above taunting or teasing a prospective enemy, however.) If forced into combat, though, they are formidable opponents. They use their magic and innate abilities to maximum effect, and their breath weapon is absolutely lethal. Their favorite tactic is to swoop down on an enemy from out of the sun, make their most effective attack, then soar off again before the enemy can respond. A mithril dragon's greatest fear is of losing the ability to fly. For this reason, they are most likely to break off combat if they believe their opponent is able to strip them of this facility.

Age	Body Lgt.	Tail Lgt.	AC	Breath Weapon	Wizard Spells	MR	XP
1	3'-6'	2'-7'	3	2d8+1	nil	nil	1,400
2	6'-14'	7'-16'	2	4d8+2	nil	nil	2,000
3	14'-22'	16'-25'	1	6d8+3	nil	5%	4,000
4	22'-31'	25'-34'	0	8d8+4	1	10%	7,000
5	31'-41'	34'-43'	-1	10d8+5	2	15%	9,000
6	41'-52'	43'-52'	-2	12d8+6	3	20%	10,000
7	52'-64'	52'-61'	-3	14d8+7	3/1	25%	11,000
8	64'-77'	61'-70'	-4	16d8+8	3/2	30%	12,000
9	77'-91'	70'-79'	-5	18d8+9	3/2/1	35%	14,000
10	91'-105'	79'-90'	-6	20d8+10	3/3/1	45%	15,000
11	105'-121'	90'-99'	-7	22d8+11	3/3/2	55%	17,000
12	121'-138'	99'-108'	-8	24d8+12	3/3/3	70%	19,000

Dragon, Mithril (Radole)

Breath Weapon/Special Abilities: A mithril dragon's breath weapon is a beam of blinding silver light, 100' long and 10' in diameter. This inflicts damage through a combination of heat and other forms of radiation. There is no known form of immunity that protects against this weapon. Targets receive a saving throw for half damage. Whether or not they succeed in this saving throw, targets must make a second save vs. breath weapon or be blinded for 1d6 hours.

Mithril dragons cast their spells and use their magical abilities at 8th level, plus their combat modifier.

At birth, mithril dragons are immune to fire and heat. As they age, they gain the following additional powers: **Very young:** *tongues*, continuous duration; **Young:** *forget* three times per day; **Juvenile:** *blink* twice per day; **Adult:** *conjure (fire) elemental* once per day; **Old:** *telekinesis* three times per day; **Very old:** *disintegrate* once per day; **Venerable:** *power word stun* twice per day.

Habitat/Society: No one has ever seen an unwounded mithril dragon on the ground, and some sages believe that the creatures spend their entire lives soaring through the blistering air. If this is so, how they mate and produce offspring is a mystery. There are some who believe that mating takes place on the wing, and that the male carries the single egg on his back until it hatches. This theory is totally unsubstantiated, however.

Mithril dragons are usually solitary creatures, soaring alone in the fierce thermals. The dragons do sometimes gather into small groups, however, and play intricate games involving aerobatics and speed runs, combined with intricate wordplay and pun-making. The creatures have a well-developed sense of humor, and the best way to get on the good side of a mithril dragon is to tell it a joke it hasn't heard before.

Some mithril dragons have a mild curiosity about the inhabitants of the Ribbon on Radole. They never actually encroach on the temperate band – there are no thermals and updrafts to play in there, after all – but sometimes come close enough to watch the comings and goings of spelljamming vessels. The creatures have no knowledge of or interest in Darkside, and consider it a nasty place not worth visiting.

The dragons have no interest in treasure, and so collect none.

Ecology: Mithril dragons are the top of the food chain, feeding mainly on the great beetles, such as the steelback. Sometimes groups of younger mithril dragons will cooperate in frying a steelback with their breath weapons, then swooping down on the carcass and tearing off bite-sized chunks until their hunger is satiated. The dragons eat surprisingly little for such massive creatures, giving some sages to think that the mithrils supplement their metabolic economy with solar energy they absorb through their skin.

Azer (Garrash)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Fire worlds
FREQUENCY:	Very rare (common)
ORGANIZATION:	Bands
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Very (12)
TREASURE:	Special
ALIGNMENT:	Lawful Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	2-16								
ARMOR CLASS:	2								
MOVEMENT:	12								
HIT DICE:	2+1 to 5+4								
THACO:	19 to 15								
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1								
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	By weapon type								
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Heat								
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Immune to fire								
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	5-20% (by size)								
SIZE:	M (5' tall)								
MORALE:	Elite (14)								
XP VALUE:	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>2+1 HD:</td> <td>40 + 3/hp</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3+2 HD:</td> <td>85 + 4/hp</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4+3 HD:</td> <td>130 + 5/hp</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5+4 HD:</td> <td>225 + 6/hp</td> </tr> </table>	2+1 HD:	40 + 3/hp	3+2 HD:	85 + 4/hp	4+3 HD:	130 + 5/hp	5+4 HD:	225 + 6/hp
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3+2 HD:	85 + 4/hp								
4+3 HD:	130 + 5/hp								
5+4 HD:	225 + 6/hp								



The azer are a race of humanoid creatures that normally inhabit the Elemental Plane of Fire. Except under special circumstances, they are very rarely found on the Prime Material Plane. In appearance, they are much like dwarves, except that they have brass-colored skin and flames for hair. Their skin is metallic. They wear only kilts or apron-like garments of beaten brass, copper or bronze.

Combat: Azer use broad-bladed javelins which inflict damage as spears. In hand-to-hand combat, they employ mallet-like weapons equal to a footman's mace in game terms. Due to their great strength, hit probability is always adjusted, as is damage, as follows:

HD	STR	Bonus to hit	Bonus to Dmg
2+1	17	+1	+1
3+2	18	+1	+2
4+3	18/01-50	+1	+3
5+4	18/51-75	+2	+3

Creatures not immune to fire suffer 2-5 points of damage if grasped by an azer, and the heat of an azer's weapons will inflict an addition +1 point of damage to such victims. Azers suffer double damage from cold-based attacks.

Habitat/Society: Azer on their home plane are part of an extremely regimented society, under the command of their ruler named Amaimon. Within this society, every individual has his or her place. The azer civilization on Garrash is a smaller version of this heavily stratified society, and is described in more detail in the appropriate chapter of this book.

In general, azer are unfriendly and taciturn, and lack compassion. They are greedy, particularly for gems that are a clear purple or red (e.g., rubies, amethysts, etc.). Once given, the word of an azer is a solid bond.

Ecology: It is not known just what – if anything – azer eat. On their home plane, their only natural enemies are other intelligent fire-dwelling creatures, and even then this enmity is not related to relative position on the food chain.

Flame Swallow (Ignia, Garrash)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any (fire worlds only)
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral
<hr/>	
NO. APPEARING:	1-4 (3-12)
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	6, Fl 30
HIT DICE:	3
THACO:	17
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-3
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Fire
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Fire resistance
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	None
SIZE:	S (5' wingspan)
MORALE:	Unsteady (5)
XP VALUE:	75

Flame swallows are magnificent, graceful birds similar in appearance to terrestrial swallows, except that their wingspan is often five feet or more. They have the same forked tail as swallows. Their color is bright red on the back of the head and down the back, shading to brilliant orange on the upper surfaces of the wings and on the tail. Their bellies and the undersides of their wings are bright yellow. Their beaks are short, but sharply-pointed, and can deliver a nasty bite.

Flame swallows are always surrounded by a nimbus of bright orange fire. This nimbus extends to a range of about three feet from the body of the bird, and is hot enough to ignite inflammable materials on contact. Flame swallows love fire in all its forms, and enjoy darting through flames and playing in the hot, turbulent air above the surface of fire worlds. They can live equally as well in the superheated atmosphere or in the fiery body of such a world. They are exceptionally curious creatures, and will investigate anything out of the ordinary. If danger – or apparent danger – appears, however, they usually flee. The creatures enjoy starting fires so that they can then play in them, and are thus highly dangerous to spelljamming vessels approaching fire worlds. Such a ship will often attract several of the beautiful creatures who approach to investigate... and then probably ignite the ship's rigging.

Flame swallows are thought to have arisen on the Elemental Plane of Fire, but are extremely rare there. Some sages think that the creatures find fire worlds on the Prime Material Plane as more attractive homes than their native plane. Flame swallows can't survive in an environment

colder than the environs of a fire world. If the ambient temperature drops below that of boiling water (212° F), a flame swallow suffers 1d6 points of damage each round that it's exposed to this "frigid" environment.

Combat: Flame swallows will almost never enter combat unless there's no alternative. If combat is necessary, they can deliver a damaging bite, but their main danger is the flame aura that surrounds them. This aura causes 1-8 points of damage to any creature not somehow immune to fire (save vs. breath weapon for half damage), and immediately ignites any flammable clothing or equipment exposed to it.

Flame swallows are totally immune to all fire- or heat-based attacks. Electrical attacks do normal damage, while cold-based attacks do triple damage.

Habitat/Society: Flame swallows congregate in small family-based flocks. Occasionally multiple flocks can be encountered, although this is very rare. Next to nothing is known about the reproductive behavior of flame swallows. Presumably they lay eggs, and – judging by the size of family flocks – presumably these eggs are few in number, or few are viable. Nobody knows, however, where the eggs are laid; no flame swallow nest has ever been discovered. The question is even more interesting because flame swallows have been reported on fire worlds with absolutely no solid surfaces on which those nests could be built. Some sages theorize that the creatures return to the Elemental Plane of Fire to lay and hatch their eggs, but this has yet to be confirmed. Further adding to the confusion, no obviously immature flame swallow has ever been seen.

Although not overly intelligent, flame swallows are amenable to training by creatures that can survive in the environment flame swallows need. Efreets on Ignia keep trained flame swallows as pets.

Ecology: Although flame swallows seem to prey on other fire-dwelling creatures such as fire bats when these other creatures are available, this seems to represent a preference rather than a necessity. Flame swallows seem to be able to survive without any such source of food. Sages theorize that they draw the energy they need to survive directly from their environment. This has yet to be confirmed, however.

Flame swallows in turn are preyed upon by other fire-dwelling creatures. (Fire bats and flame swallows seem particularly inimical, and generally attack each other on sight.)

Because of their ability to subsist on no food, there is much controversy over just what position flame swallows hold in the food chain.

Gyre (Bodi)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Temperate forests
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVE TIME:	Day
DIET:	Carnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1 (1-4)
ARMOR CLASS:	5
MOVEMENT:	3, Fl 24
HIT DICE:	5
THACO:	15
NO. OF ATTACKS:	3
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-12/1-4/1-4
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Fear, surprise on 1-4
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	H (20' wingspan)
MORALE:	Elite (14)
XP VALUE:	400

The gyre is a huge feathered bird similar in appearance to the terrestrial condor. While its wingspan is 20 feet or even more, its body length is rarely over 6 feet. The upper surfaces of its body and wings are a rich green, while its underbelly and the undersides of its wings are a pale grey-blue. This coloration makes for excellent natural camouflage. When roosting in the treetops, wings folded, its green coloration blends in with the leaves around it; when soaring overhead, its grey-blue underside makes it difficult to see against the sky.

Gyres are perfectly evolved for the sky, and can remain aloft for tens of hours without landing.

Combat: Gyres prefer to attack by swooping down on their victims from above. Their eyesight is unmatched at picking out movement, although they are less capable of distinguishing targets that remain motionless. When they swoop on their prey, gyres can bite with their wickedly-curved beak, or rake with their taloned feet; they are unable to use both attack forms simultaneously. If a gyre hits with both talon attacks, it is able to carry away any creature weighing less than 75 pounds. A victim so snatched automatically suffers maximum claw damage on each subsequent round, and the gyre is able to bite at it with a +4 bonus to hit. In addition, the gyre is able to drop the victim at any time, for potentially lethal falling damage.

A gyre has an innate ability to induce magical *fear* on any creature under 4 HD or levels that is beneath the bird as it

flies. The maximum vertical range of this power is 500 feet. Creatures within this *fear* effect must save vs. spells or flee in terror from the gyre. (Note that this makes it difficult for prey to remain immobile, and hence unnoticed by the gyre.)

The arrangement of a gyre's feathers are such that it is almost silent in flight. Combined with its coloration, this gives the gyre a much greater chance to surprise its prey.

Gyres will rarely attack anything of size M or larger. If anything approaches within 500 feet of the gyre's treetop nest, however, the bird will attack to try and drive the interloper away. If there are young in the nest, the gyre will fight to the death to protect them.

Habitat/Society: Gyres live in large, untidy nests constructed in the tops of the tallest trees. They are normally solitary predators, but in the spring, they seek mates. Courtship displays, performed by the male, involve climbing to extreme altitudes then tipping over into steep, screaming glides, pulling out scant feet above the tops of the trees near where females are roosting.

After mating, the female lays one or two eggs. Fertility rates are low, however, so there is only a 50% chance that any given egg will hatch. Hatching occurs in high summer, and the parents cooperate in feeding the hatchlings. The parents teach the young to fly in late fall, at which time any encounter with gyre has a 75% chance probability of being with a family group (1 or 2 parents, with 1 or 2 young, 10-80% mature). When the young reach full maturity, in late winter, the family group breaks up.

The gyre lives for approximately 15 years.

Ecology: Gyre are straightforward predators, preying on other birds and on animals that they can snatch out of the upper branches of the trees. When hunting, gyre use an interesting tactic for picking prey from lower down in the trees. They go into a shallow dive, then tuck their wings and draw in their long neck. Like blunt, feathered projectiles, they smash through the thin branches, snatch their prey, then wait until there's enough room for a wingbeat or two to bring them back up out of the trees. Gyre hunting in this manner can be heard at great distances. (It doesn't always work, of course. Broken bodies of gyres found on the forest floor are mute testimony to the fact that the big birds sometimes just don't find the room to take those one or two wingbeats...)

Gyre are near the top of the food chain. The only creatures that prey upon them are the Bodi elves – who sometimes hunt them with longbows – and green dragons. Their natural camouflage gives the gyre some protection against both, of course.

Imbul (Falx)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Rocky plains
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	Omnivore
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1 (3-7; 2d3+1)
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	2
THACO:	16
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	2-5
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Poison, surprise on 1-4
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	S (3' long)
MORALE:	Unsteady (7)
XP VALUE:	45

The Falx imbul, or rock lizard, is a large, heavy lizard, about 3 feet long (4-5 feet including tail), resembling a pugnacious iguana. Its color ranges from dusty grey to dark brown, and its remarkably thick skin is very similar in texture to rock. When the creature remains immobile, it is very difficult to spot (80% chance of not being noticed).

Its eyes are small and red, and protected by protruding ridges of bone. It has a crest atop its head which normally lies flat along the back of its neck, but which it can erect as a threat display. It has stubby legs, but moves rapidly for all that. Its wide mouth doesn't have teeth, as such; instead, the creature bites and chews its prey with bony ridges.

Combat: The imbul's primary attack is its bite. The bone ridges within its mouth are jagged and sharp, and can inflict terrible wounds. In addition, the imbul's saliva is highly toxic. Anyone bitten by the creature suffers an additional 3-18 points of damage (a successful save vs. poison decreases the damage to a flat 2 points). There is no limit to the number of times an imbul can inflict this poison. The imbul itself is totally immune to this poison.

The imbul has another attack form which it uses only as a last resort to save its life. Once per day, the creature can regurgitate its highly toxic digestive fluids and expel them in a cloud of poisonous mist. This cloud takes the form of a cone, originating at the creature's mouth, that is 15 feet long and 6 feet in diameter at its widest point. Any creature that inhales this cloud of mist must save vs. poison or die instantly from heart failure. Holding one's breath is no sure protection against this mist, although it does decrease the

damage potential. The toxic liquid can be absorbed through the skin, as with a green dragon's breath weapon, and inflicts 4-24 points of damage (save vs. breath weapon for half damage). Use of this "breath weapon" is highly painful for the imbul, and so it will use it only if the alternative appears to be death. Also, the poison mist causes tissue breakdown in its victim which makes the target inedible for the imbul. Thus the creature will never use this weapon when hunting for food.

In personality, the imbul is a bully, preferring to attack creatures smaller than itself. It will attack larger creatures, but only if it can do so with surprise. If faced with determined opposition, it tries to escape. (This personality trait is reflected in the creature's low morale score.) The only exception to this is in the case of adult imbuls accompanied by young. In this situation, both parents will give their own lives if necessary to protect their offspring; their effective morale score increases to 20.

Imbuls are partially resistant to heat and fire. Attacks based on fire or heat do only half damage. Electrical attacks do normal damage, and cold-based attacks do double damage. Imbuls are totally resistant to acid.

Habitat/Society: Imbuls are generally solitary predators. Every spring, however, adult imbuls seek mates. It is the females that perform most of the courtship rituals, and non-lethal fights are common between females contesting for mates. During the mate-seeking period in early spring, female imbuls will challenge anything that moves with a threat display. This involves erecting the head crest, hissing and making mock charges. (Obviously, this cuts down the number of females somewhat, since making a mock charge at a tarrasque has predictable and unpleasant consequences.) Once a pair has mated, they remain bonded until their offspring reach maturity. After impregnation, the female lays 1-4 eggs, which hatch in 60 days. The newborn imbuls are 1/2 HD, with no attacks. They grow rapidly, though, and reach maturity by fall. At this time, the family group splits up and the individuals go their separate ways.

During summer, there is a 50% chance that any encounter with imbuls is with a family group of 2d3+1 creatures. Two will be adults, while the others are immature young, 10-80% grown.

Ecology: Imbuls are by preference predatory carnivores, hunting other lizards across the hot, flat terrain of Falx. During the winter, imbuls are omnivorous, and will attack each other. If no live game is available, however, the imbuls will feed on the carpet mosses that cover the landscape. They rarely kill these great colony organisms, however, preferring to tear off mouthfuls as they get hungry.

In turn, imbuls are prey for tarrasques and larger lizards.

Holbag (Alabeth)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Third layer, Alabeth
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	Aerial "plankton"
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	None
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

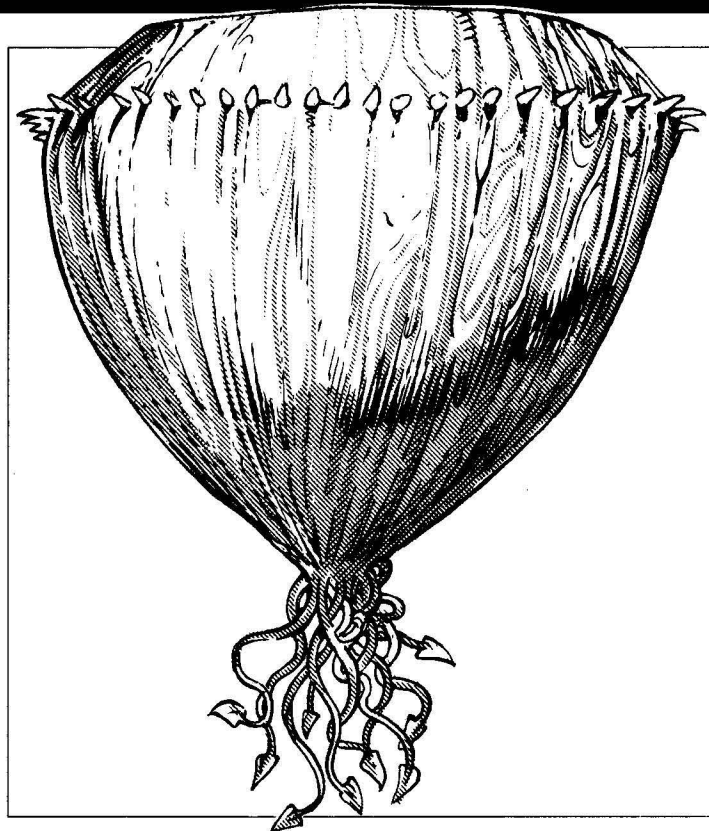
NO. APPEARING:	1 (1-3)
ARMOR CLASS:	6
MOVEMENT:	Fl 2 (5) MCA
HIT DICE:	Special
THACO:	3
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	4-80
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Lightning, ram
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Regeneration
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	5%
SIZE:	G (see below)
MORALE:	Fearless (20)
XP VALUE:	1,000

Holbags are huge, gas-filled bags that float in the atmosphere of the third layer of Alabeth (refer to the description of that planet for details on layers, etc.). They are somewhat like onions in shape: circular when viewed from above, flattened on top, and tapering to a point beneath. This lower point is tipped with a dozen short tendrils. The largest circumference of the creature – which is just below the flat top – is ringed with 144 slender spines, each of which is equal in length to about one-twentieth the diameter of the holbag.

The size of a holbag is almost unbelievable for a living creature. Mature specimens measure between 3 and 5 miles in diameter, and exceptional specimens up to 10 miles in diameter have been spotted. This means that the equatorial spines are between 750 and 1,350 feet long on an average specimen, and almost 3,000 feet long – more than half a mile – on extreme specimens. The shorter tendrils attached at the creature's lower tip are about half the length of its equatorial spines.

Holbags float slowly about the atmosphere of Alabeth. They are lighter than air because they secrete gas much lighter than air into a huge internal cavity, and then heat it to generate even more lift. In effect, holbags are massive natural dirigibles. Their bodies are thick and muscular, and very rubbery in texture.

The amount of damage that can be absorbed by a typical holbag is absolutely immense. Their muscular walls are a hundred yards or more in thickness, and it would take upwards of 300 hit points – all inflicted on exactly the same spot – to puncture one. Such a puncture will cause the creature to deflate slowly, sinking downwards into the cloud deck below, where it dies. With a single puncture, it will take an average holbag 20 turns to lose enough gas to start



to descend. (Since the creatures regenerate rapidly, an enemy would have to work to keep a puncture from closing.)

Holbags have no eyes or optical organs, and operate solely on senses other than sight. They seem to respond to pressure changes caused by large objects – i.e., those over 50' in size – moving nearby, but can also detect large motionless creatures at a range of 500 yards or more. Some sages speculate that the holbags detect the slight electrical fields created by all living things.

Combat: Holbags defend themselves against natural enemies – most importantly, sky scavvers (cf.) – with magical lightning. They can fire a single lightning bolt every 5 rounds. The bolt extends straight outward from any one of the holbag's equatorial spines, to a maximum range of 500 yards. These bolts always strike their targets, and inflict 4d20 points of damage on impact (save vs. breath weapons for half damage). A holbag can use its lightning against a spelljamming vessel, inflicting 4d2 points of hull damage; the vessel receives a saving throw vs. lightning for half damage. There is no limit to how many times a holbag can fire its lightning. (Note: This damage and range figure reflects an average individual. Exceptionally large holbags might have a maximum range of 750 yards, and inflict up to 8d20 hit points, or 8d2 hull points, of damage.)

Although they move very slowly, adult holbags can do significant damage by ramming a spelljamming vessel. (The creatures don't have precise enough senses to detect

Holbag (Alabeth)

any creature smaller than about 50' in length or diameter.) Use the standard rules for ramming and crashes on page 65 of the *Concordance of Arcane Space*

Because of their rubbery, muscular structure, holbags cannot be harmed by blunt or bludgeoning weapons (note that this includes blunt rams). Piercing and slashing weapons do normal damage. Holbags are totally immune to lightning; fire- and cold-based attacks do normal damage. Since holbags have no mind in the normal sense of the word, they are immune to *charm*, illusions and other mind-affecting magic.

Holbags regenerate, at a rate of 2 hit points per round. This means that a puncture will eventually close unless an attacker makes a conscious effort to keep it open.

Habitat/Society: Holbags are usually solitary creatures. Under normal circumstances, adult holbags won't approach within one mile of each other. Every 10,000 standard days or so (about 27 standard years), however, holbags enter their mating season. When this happens, adult holbags "pair up." For several days, pairs of the massive creatures enact great and cumbersome aerial "dances" around each other. Then the two holbags approach each other slowly until they come into contact. The great equatorial spines of each creature sink into the flesh of the other, and they remain locked together like this for as many as 50 standard days. During this period, the creatures' senses are extremely sensitive, and they can detect the approach of a possible enemy at almost twice the normal range. If anything is foolish enough to approach two mating holbags, both of the great creatures will attack the interloper with their lightning bolts. Bonded holbags can each fire a lightning bolt only every 10 rounds (1 turn), but these bolts have double range and inflict double damage.

After about 50 standard days, the two holbags separate, and return to their standard behavior (i.e., never approaching within one mile of each other). Five hundred days later, one of the holbags gives birth to an immature creature. (Sages have found no way of predicting which individual in a mated pair will actually give birth to the offspring.) The offspring emerges from an orifice at the lower tip of the mature creature.

Immature Holbags: At birth, a holbag is tiny compared to its parent: no more than 250 yards across. In appearance it resembles its "parent": the relationships between diameter and spine length are the same as with adults. Immature holbags are considerably faster fliers than their parents: a movement rate of 5 rather than 2.

Immature holbags are much less resilient than their parents. A newly-born holbag can sustain only 25 hit points or so inflicted in the same spot before it is punctured. The young creatures regenerate at the same rate as their parents, however.

A young holbag can fire lightning bolts, but only to a range of about 75 to 100 yards. These bolts inflict only 1d20 hit points of damage, or 1d2 hull points, on a target (save for half damage).

Immature holbags grow slowly, taking about one mating cycle – 10,000 standard days – to reach full size and maturity. While it's young and undersized, a holbag will usually stay close to its parent, often snuggling up right against it, so the "baby's" equatorial spines are sunk into the flesh of its parent.

Unlike the adults, which seem totally insensitive to pain, immature holbags react strongly to pain, particularly heat. They will move rapidly away from a strong source of heat. The elves who dwell atop the mature holbags will often use this characteristic to control immature specimens. A group of elves will climb aboard a young holbag, and then will apply heat – usually magically-created – to the margin of the creature directly opposite to the direction the elves want to go. The holbag will move to avoid the heat, allowing the elves to control its movements.

Ecology: Holbags subsist entirely on the "aerial plankton" that drifts down from the second layer of Alabeth. They absorb these microscopic creatures through pores in their great bodies, and through the orifice in their undersides. The holbags have only one significant natural enemy: sky scavvers (described below). These monstrous creatures risk the damaging attacks of the holbags' lightning to dart in and rip huge mouthfuls of flesh from the floating gas bags. These attacks rarely puncture, let alone kill, an adult holbag.

Although sky scavvers will attack mature holbags – often to their detriment – they prefer to harry the small, immature specimens. When these smaller creatures stray too far from their parents, they are relatively easy targets for the "sky sharks." Sky scavvers seem to understand instinctively about the young creatures' response of moving away from a source of pain. Thus the sky sharks will always make their first attack on a young holbag on the side closest to the creature's parent. In response to the pain of the attack, the young holbag will move further from the protection of its parent, lessening the risk of a lethal attack from the mature holbag. This technique is very effective, and the mortality rate for young holbags is high – approaching 95%.

Holbags are extremely long-lived. An average specimen might live through 20 mating cycles – 200,000 standard days, or almost 550 standard years – and exceptional specimens have been said to be considerably older than this. The population of holbags on Alabeth seems to be remaining roughly constant.

Holbags seem totally unaware – or at least unconcerned – that their topsides are home to Alabeth elves and other creatures. The relationship between these smaller creatures and the holbags is pure commensalism: the elves and others receive benefits, while the holbags receive neither benefit nor detriment from the relationship.

Scavver, Sky (Alabeth)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Third layer, Alabeth
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary/pack
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	Predator
INTELLIGENCE:	Semi- (4)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral (evil)

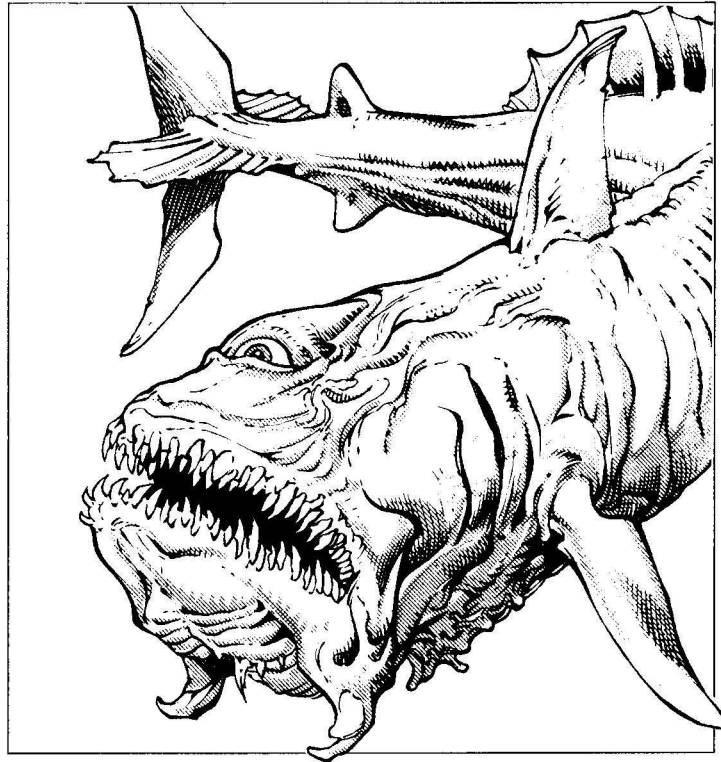
NO. APPEARING:	1 (1-4)
ARMOR CLASS:	3
MOVEMENT:	Fl 18
HIT DICE:	22
THACO:	3
NO. OF ATTACKS:	2
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	4-40/3-30
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Swallow, lightning bolt
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	G (100')
MORALE:	Elite (13)
XP VALUE:	12,000

Apart from their size, sky scavvers are identical in structure to the other five known species of scavvers: long, fishlike creatures, dominated by a single huge, glowing human-like eye at the leading edge of the head, with a wide, sweeping mouth full of sharp carnivore's teeth. The sheer size of the sky scavver is enough to set it apart from its space-dwelling brethren, however: the average mature specimen is about 100 feet in length.

Sky scavvers fly through the air of the third layer of Alabeth, using a modified form of the more well-known scavvers' innate spelljamming ability. They are pure predators, living off the many aerial creatures that occupy the third layer of the might air world. While they will eat virtually anything that crosses their path, their favorite food is the holbags – the gigantic floating gas bags native to Alabeth's third layer.

Combat: The sky scavver's primary attack is a bite from their huge, tooth-studded mouth. Such an attack inflicts 4d10 hit points of damage. The mouth is big enough to allow the creatures to bite even something as large as a spelljamming vessel, inflicting 1d4 hull points of damage. In addition, an adult sky scavver can swallow whole any creature of size L or smaller, and will do so on an attack roll of 13 or more. The sky scavver has a gullet poison similar to the brown scavver – victims must save vs. poison or die in three rounds – but lacks the ability to expel it into the air. Its interior is AC 5, and it is possible for a victim to cut his way out with small hand-held weapons. The bellies of sky scavvers will sometimes contain undigestible residue from earlier meals: metals, stones (including gems) and the like. Sky scavvers can also deal a punishing tail-slap like that of the kindori. This attack inflicts 3d10 hit points of damage, or 1d3 hull points.

The sky scavver's most dangerous attack, however, is its ability to fire a powerful lightning bolt from its single eye.



This bolt has a maximum range of 250 yards, and inflicts 2d20 hit points, or 2-4 hull points, of damage (save vs. spells – or lightning, for ships – for half damage).

Sky scavvers are totally immune to electrical-based attacks. Other attacks inflict normal damage. Although they have some intelligence, their minds are sufficiently different from those of demihumans that they are totally immune to *charm*, illusions and other mind-affecting magic.

Habitat/Society: Sky scavvers usually operate as solitary predators. When they're attacking holbags, however, they hunt in packs of 1-4. They are as ferocious as the void scavver, but won't kill other members of their species who try to "muscle in" on their prey. There is a strongly-defined "pecking order" within a sky scavver pack, however, with the strongest individuals always feeding first.

The intelligence of sky scavvers is sufficient to let them plan the best manner of attack against larger opponents. (The technique these creatures favor against immature holbags is discussed in the section describing these great gas bags.) Many people who have seen sky scavvers operate claim that their intelligence is actively malign.

Ecology: Sky scavvers are simple-minded predators. They have no natural enemies as such – that is, creatures that feed on them. Attacks against mature holbags are highly dangerous, however, and lead to the deaths of many sky scavvers. Since the holbags eat nothing but aerial plankton, the bodies of dead scavvers simply fall into the lower layers of Alabeth's atmosphere – presumably to be devoured by other creatures.

Steelback Beetle (Radole)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Any
FREQUENCY:	Uncommon
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Animal (1)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

NO. APPEARING:	1-3
ARMOR CLASS:	0
MOVEMENT:	9
HIT DICE:	9
THACO:	11
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	3-24
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Charge, trample
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	15%
SIZE:	H (20')
MORALE:	Fanatic (18)
XP VALUE:	850

Steelbacks are huge beetle-like creatures with highly-reflective metallic shells covering their backs. The large shell is an almost perfect hemisphere, supported less than a foot off the ground by 36 short, multi-jointed legs. The creature's head is usually drawn in beneath the shell so that only its long, serrated mandibles are exposed. However, the creature can shoot its head out forward with blinding speed, extending the reach of its mandibles by an additional 5 feet. For such a large creature, the steelback is remarkably fast, and its multiple legs allow it to traverse virtually any kind of terrain.

Combat: The steelback's main attack is an incredibly damaging bite from its long mandibles. If it succeeds in biting an opponent of size M or smaller, it can maintain its grip, inflicting maximum damage on each subsequent round until its victim is dead, or the beetle disengages to engage another target.

The creature's normal speed is fast enough, but it is able to increase its speed by 16 for a charge of up to 60 feet. If it chooses to attack with its mandibles at the end of this charge, it receives a +2 bonus to hit. Instead of biting, it can simply slam into its target, using its mass to inflict damage. The targets of such a charge each suffer 2-12 points of damage, and must roll under their Dex + Str on 2d20 or be knocked off their feet and trampled under the steelback. Such a trampling attack inflicts hit points equal to 20 plus the victim's AC.

It is theoretically possible – albeit very difficult – to roll a steelback over onto its back to expose its underbelly, which is AC 5. The steelback's hemispherical shape, however, makes it fairly easy for the creature to roll back onto its feet merely by shifting its weight within its shell.

Steelbacks are totally resistant to fire and heat. Electrical attacks do no damage, and lightning bolts reflect perfectly off the metallic shell. Fifty percent of lightning bolts reflect back directly towards the spellcaster who fired them; the other 50% reflect in random directions, possibly endangering the spellcaster's comrades. Cold-based attacks inflict double damage. For each round that the creature is in an environment colder than 300° F, it suffers 1d8 points of damage. Steelbacks are totally immune to all forms of poison (including such things as green dragon breath).

Habitat/Society: Steelbacks hunt either singly or in small groups. It's unknown whether these groups represent families, or are just random associations of creatures. Hunting groups form and break apart seemingly randomly.

The beetles are all female, and reproduce by parthenogenesis (reproduction without the participation of a male, like certain Amazonian fish on Earth). Every 500 standard days, a steelback lays 1d4 eggs, which the creature conceals in the shallows of a "lake" of molten metal. Fifty days later, the newly-hatched steelbacks emerge from the lake and go off on their own. New hatchlings have the following characteristics: HD 3, THACO 17, Dmg 1-8. A charge attack inflicts 1-4 points of damage, and they are unable to trample. All other attributes are as for the adult creatures. They grow quickly, reaching full size in only 150 standard days. No one knows exactly how long steelbacks live, although there are indications that they might live for as many as 15,000 standard days.

Because the creatures require high temperatures to survive, they can never approach the Ribbon region of Radole, and hence pose no threat to the creatures that live there.

Ecology: Steelbacks have been described as mindless killing machines. They are predators, living on the other beetle-like creatures that dwell on Radole's Sunside. Many sages believe that steelbacks absorb the energy that they require to live from the harsh sunlight that beats down on them continuously. If this is true, it follows that they must eat only to provide them with the raw materials required to enlarge and heal their bodies. Such being the case, it would be impossible to starve a steelback to death, providing it received sufficient sunlight. (This would also explain the creature's immunity to poisons.)

Strangler (Plata)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Plains
FREQUENCY:	Rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	Predator
INTELLIGENCE:	Non- (0)
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

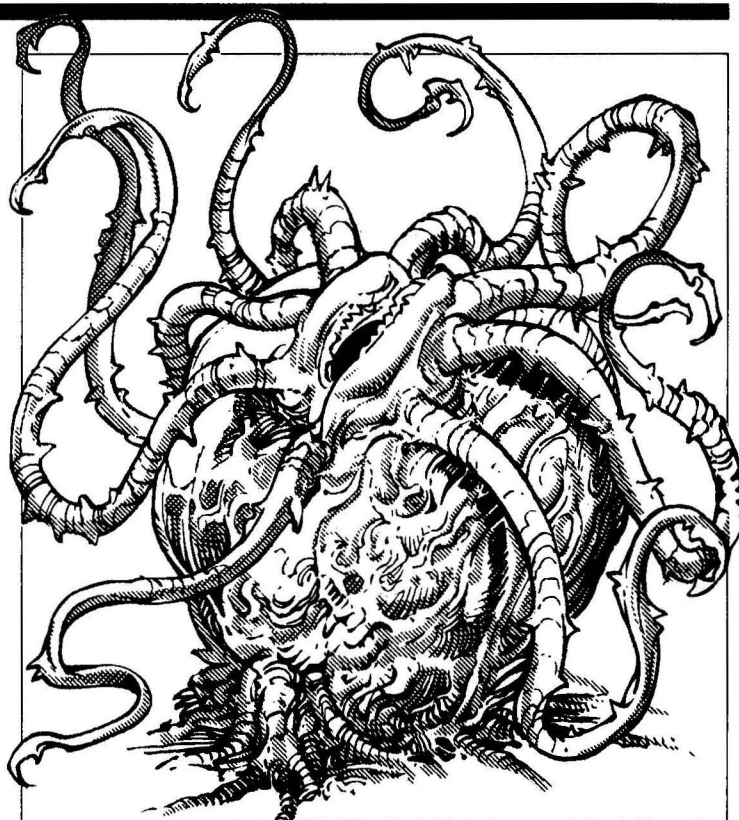
NO. APPEARING:	1
ARMOR CLASS:	4 (7)
MOVEMENT:	Nil
HIT DICE:	6
THACO:	14
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1-6
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	1-8
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Paralysis, crush
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	Nil
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	Nil
SIZE:	G (25' diameter)
MORALE:	Elite (14)
XP VALUE:	3,000

Stranglers are carnivorous plants native to the disk world of Plata. The plant's central body is short and stocky – roughly spherical and about 3 feet in diameter. Extending out from this center are 8 “tentacles,” arrayed evenly around the plant, each about 10-12 feet long. These tentacles resemble thick green vines, about the thickness of a man's wrist, and extend outward along the ground from the central body. The tentacles are dark green, while the central body is a light greenish-yellow.

The green coloration of a strangler implies that the plant is at least partially photosynthetic. But this isn't its only source of sustenance. Although the long tentacular vines are usually stationary, they can under the right circumstances move extremely fast. The “right circumstances” is the approach of an animal of some kind within range of one or more tentacles. Tentacles lash out in an attempt to capture the animal and drag it into a fleshy mouth that opens in the top of the central body. Once the animal is “swallowed,” the strangler's digestive enzymes dissolve it over a period of several hours.

Nobody knows exactly what senses a strangler possesses. It is unaffected by either darkness or bright light, and doesn't react to sound or silence. Most sages agree that the creature somehow senses movement, since it will never attack a motionless creature that it hasn't already captured with at least one tentacle.

Combat: At the first moment that a potential prey comes within range, one or more of the tentacles lashes out and attempts to wrap itself around the animal. This requires a successful attack roll. A successful capture means that the target creature is grasped by at least one tentacle, and suffers 1d8 hit points of crushing damage. Each



subsequent round – unless the creature manages to escape – the tentacle continues to crush its target for maximum damage, and attempts to drag it towards the central body of the plant. Unless the plant has to contend with more than one target simultaneously, it will continue to wrap more tentacles around its prey as the unfortunate animal is dragged closer to its central body. A single creature can be attacked by no more than 6 tentacles. Subsequent tentacle attacks receive a +2 bonus to their attack rolls for each tentacle already gripping the target.

In addition to crushing damage, the tentacles of a strangler inflict a more insidious attack on their prey. The tentacles secrete an enzymatic mixture which causes paralysis in its prey. Each round that a creature is in the grip of a strangler, it must make a saving throw vs. poison or become paralyzed. This paralysis lasts until the creature is either dead or freed from the grip of the strangler; in the latter case, the paralysis fades gradually over a period of 2d8 rounds. For each additional tentacle in excess of one that grips a single victim, that victim suffers a -1 penalty to its saving throw against paralysis.

Once the strangler has shoved its victim into its fleshy mouth, the victim suffers 1d10 hit points of damage each round from enzymatic secretions (save vs. acid for half damage). In addition, the victim must save vs. breath weapons with a -5 penalty each round it's in the plant's mouth or be paralyzed. The body of a dead creature will be dissolved and unrecoverable after 2d12 hours.

The easiest way to free a victim from a strangler tentacle

Strangler (Plata)

is to cut off the tentacle. A tentacle has AC 7 – as opposed to AC 4 for the central body – and can withstand only 2d8 hit points of damage before it's destroyed. Damage inflicted on tentacles isn't counted against the strangler's total "hit point pool," and can't kill the creature. Only hits against the central body can actually kill the creature. A strangler can regenerate a destroyed tentacle in 1d6 days. It can regenerate multiple tentacles at the same time, although the time complete regeneration takes is increased by one day for each tentacle in excess of one that the plant must re-grow.

A strong, un-paralyzed creature might be able to tear itself free from a strangler, or at least prevent itself from being dragged into the central maw. To free himself from a tentacle, a character must make a "bend bars" roll based on Strength. A successful roll means the creature has torn free from one tentacle. Such an attempt takes one entire round in which the character can do nothing else. (Breaking free from a tentacle doesn't mean that same tentacle can't attack again on the next round, of course.)

High Strength can also let a character prevent a strangler from dragging him within range of its mouth. The procedure is as follows: First, consider that each tentacle gripping the character has a Strength of 16. Now add together the Strength scores of the captured character plus any other characters who are trying to help him pull away. Compare this to the Strength total of the tentacles currently holding the character. If the characters' total Strength is greater than or equal to the strangler's total strength – that is, 16 times the number of tentacles gripping the victim – then the plant is unable to pull its prey any closer to its mouth. If the characters' total Strength is less than the strangler's total strength, however, the plant continues to drag its prey closer. (For example: Balfas the warrior (Str 14) is grabbed by two strangler tentacles. Balfas' friends Adria (Str 9) and Lykan (Str 12) try to help him

resist the plant's pull. The characters' total Strength is 35; the strangler's total Strength for the two tentacles is 32 (16 X 2). Balfas and friends can resist the pull of the strangler... just. If the plant scores a hit with another tentacle, Balfas and his two friends will be unable to resist any longer.) It's important to remember that anyone trying to help a captured victim is by definition within range of at least one other tentacle...

Fire- and heat-based attacks do double damage to a strangler. All other attack forms do normal damage. Since the plant has no mind as such, it is totally immune to *charm*, illusions, and other mind-affecting magic.

Habitat/Society: Stranglers are non- mobile and totally unintelligent. They cannot communicate with their own kind in any way.

Every 250 days or so, a single blood-red flower blooms atop a strangler's central body. This flower is beautiful to see, but smells of carrion. The flower remains open for several days, then the seed pod below the flower bursts, scattering seeds to the winds. Since there are no insects or birds on Plata to fertilize the stranglers, the plants must depend solely on the wind to do so – not a particularly effective strategy. The relative frequency of the plants proves that this scheme does work, however.

Ecology: Stranglers are virtually perfect "opportunistic predators." If animal prey wanders within its grasp, the plant will eat it. If no animals come near, however, the plant is perfectly happy to subsist purely on photosynthesis.

The humanoids of Plata hate stranglers with a passion, and have sometimes tried to wipe the entire species out... with little to no success. The aarakocra consider the red blossoms to be the greatest of delicacies, and sometimes will risk attacks from stranglers to snatch the flowers.

Zat (Garrash)

CLIMATE/TERRAIN:	Fire ring (Garrash only)
FREQUENCY:	Very rare
ORGANIZATION:	Solitary
ACTIVE TIME:	Any
DIET:	Special
INTELLIGENCE:	Unratable
TREASURE:	Nil
ALIGNMENT:	Neutral

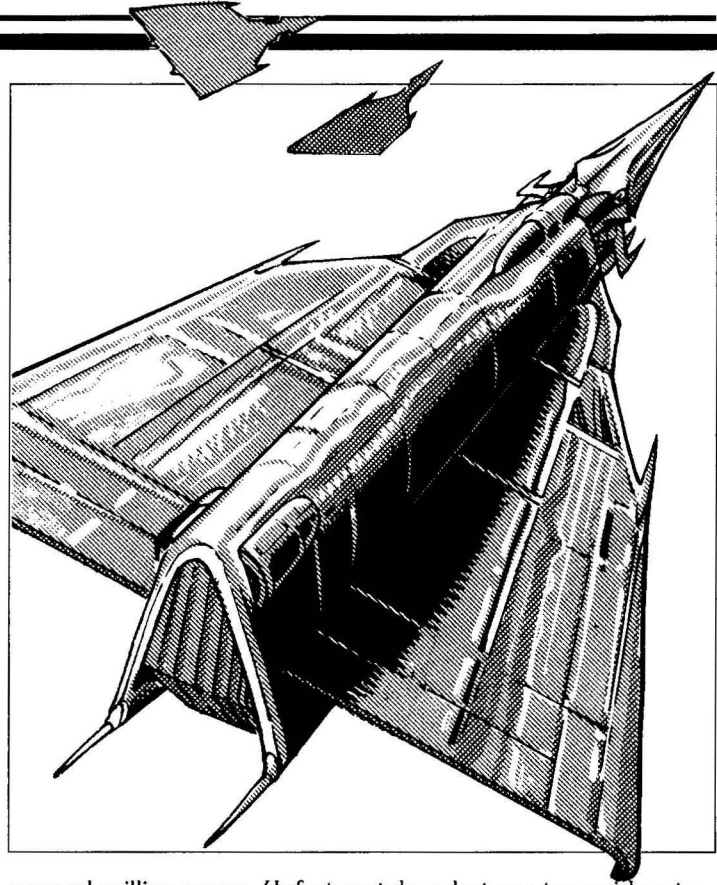
NO. APPEARING:	1-2
ARMOR CLASS:	Armor Rating 0
MOVEMENT:	SR 5
HIT DICE:	20 hull points
THACO:	3
NO. OF ATTACKS:	1
DAMAGE/ATTACK:	6 hull points
SPECIAL ATTACKS:	Ram
SPECIAL DEFENSES:	None
MAGIC RESISTANCE:	15%
SIZE:	G (100')
MORALE:	Fearless (20)
XP VALUE:	2,000

Zats are huge, metallic creatures built like delta-winged planes. Their bodies are cylindrical and about 100' long, while their knife-edge metal wings span about 150'. The "stem" of their bodies are blunt, while their "bows" are sharp enough to act as piercing rams. Zats are made entirely out of high-melting-point metal alloys, which has an almost perfect mirror finish. In another universe, they might be considered to be artifacts; in the SPELLJAMMER™ game universe, however, they are definitely alive. They soar through the fire-ring of the planet Garrash, apparently using their huge wings to "tack" against the light pressure from the fire world like huge solar sailors.

Zats are highly intelligent, although their mentality follows a totally different model from that of most life-forms. They communicate among themselves using subtly-changing magnetic fields. This type of communication is virtually instantaneous, and its range is measured in the millions of miles. It requires a clear line-of-sight, so although a zat has the range to communicate with another such creature on the other side of Garrash, the mass of the planet would block the communication.

Communication can be established with zats by using *telepathy*, but not much comes through the link. The spellcaster would receive a colossal sense of surprise, followed by a welter of incomprehensible thoughts. A spellcaster trying to penetrate this confusing flood of thoughts must save vs. spells. A failed save leaves the spellcaster confused for 1d10 turns. A successful save means he has established communication with the zat.

Zats are peaceable creatures, and very curious about things that happen in "their" area of space, although they are indifferent about virtually everything else. They seem to be immortal, and have observed the planet Garrash for



several million years. Unfortunately, what a zat considers to be important isn't the kind of thing a demihuman would want to know. Zats notice changes in thermal and luminous flux from the fire world, changes in the density of the fire-ring, and such things. They have no conception that there are living creatures on the planet, and honestly couldn't care less. They speculate endlessly on complex philosophical issues that would leave even thri-kreen totally confused.

Any spelljamming vessel approaching or entering the ring will attract the attention of 1 or 2 zats, who will approach to observe the "strange creature" that has come to visit them. (Considering their size, it's only logical that the zats would think that the ship itself is a living creature. It won't be easy to convince them that the ship is inanimate, and the controlling intelligence lies with the insignificant specks scurrying about on deck.)

Combat: While zats are basically peaceable creatures, they share with virtually every other living thing a strong sense of self-preservation. If they're attacked, they'll definitely fight to protect themselves.

Combat with a zat uses the same techniques as ship-to-ship combat, as detailed in the SPELLJAMMER™ boxed set (thus the fact that their movement is described in terms of "Ship Rating"). Their only attack is a ram, which can't be used against anything smaller than 1 ton (e.g., an elven Flitter). There is some characteristic – as yet unexplained – about the zat's sharp "bow" that inflicts more hull damage than a "vessel" of its size should be able to.

Zat (Garrash)

Zats save as “hard metal,” and are totally immune to heat- and fire-based attacks. Electrical attacks inflict only half damage. Note that a zat’s “HD” figure is expressed in terms of “hull points.” It takes 10 hit points of damage – inflicted on exactly the same spot – to cause 1 hull point of damage. They are totally immune to charm-based magic, and other magical and quasi-magical powers that affect the mind (illusions, psionics, etc.).

Although zats are basically fearless, they aren’t stupid, and won’t fight to the death except under the most exceptional of circumstances. They can use their long-range communication to summon more of their kind if things are getting dicey. Militant PCs should soon realize that, no matter how tough their ship is, it’s not up to “dogfighting” with a whole squadron of zats. All in all, it’s much safer to talk than fight.

Habitat/Society: Zats are basically solitary creatures. They enjoy philosophical discussions with others of their kind, but their long-range magnetic communication means they don’t have to congregate to do this.

Nothing is known about zat reproduction. In fact, the zats themselves can’t even comprehend the concept when they’ve been asked telepathically. The most widely held belief is that all existing zats were created – by what or by whom is a key question – at some time in the distant past, and they have no need or capacity to reproduce.

If a zat is killed, every other zat within communication range – about 75 million miles – knows it immediately, and receives a “mental picture” of who or what caused the zat’s death. All surviving zats will feel an implacable – and eternal – hatred for whoever or whatever killed one of their fellows. (Thus, any spelljamming vessel that dispatches a zat will find Garrash’s ring a very inhospitable region until the end of time...)

Ecology: Zats have no orifice through which they can absorb matter. The only conclusion to draw from this fact is that they don’t have to. The fire-ring of Garrash is definitely a high-energy environment, and it seems likely that the massive creatures absorb all the energy they need to survive from that source.



THE WORLDS OF PRACTICAL PLANETOLOGY

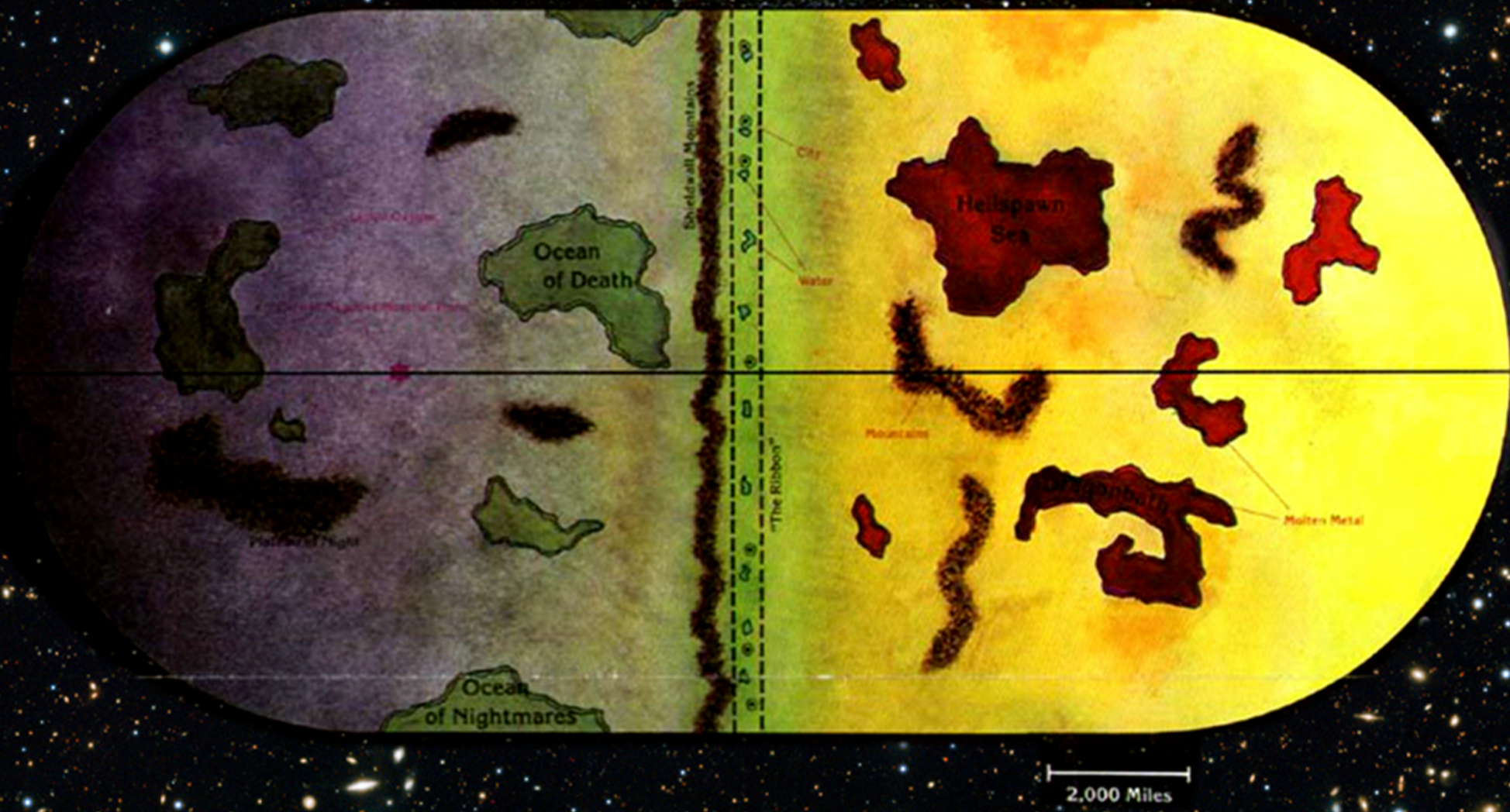
TORUS

Mapping a toroid is something of a problem. To see how the planet is "put together," imagine rolling the map into a cylinder so that points A and B are together and points C and D are together. Then connect the two ends of this tube to form a "donut" (that is, connect it so points A/B and C/D are together).

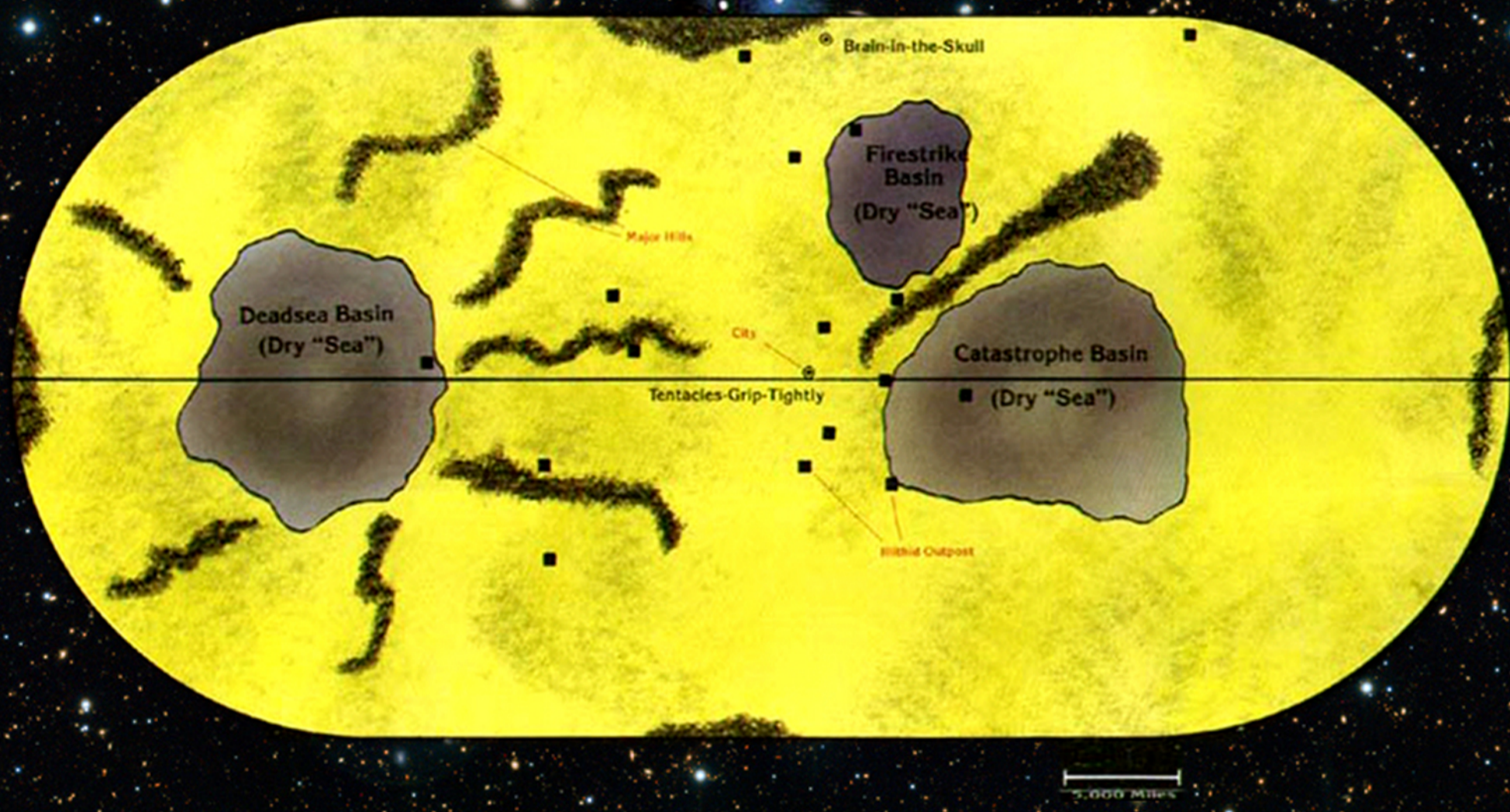


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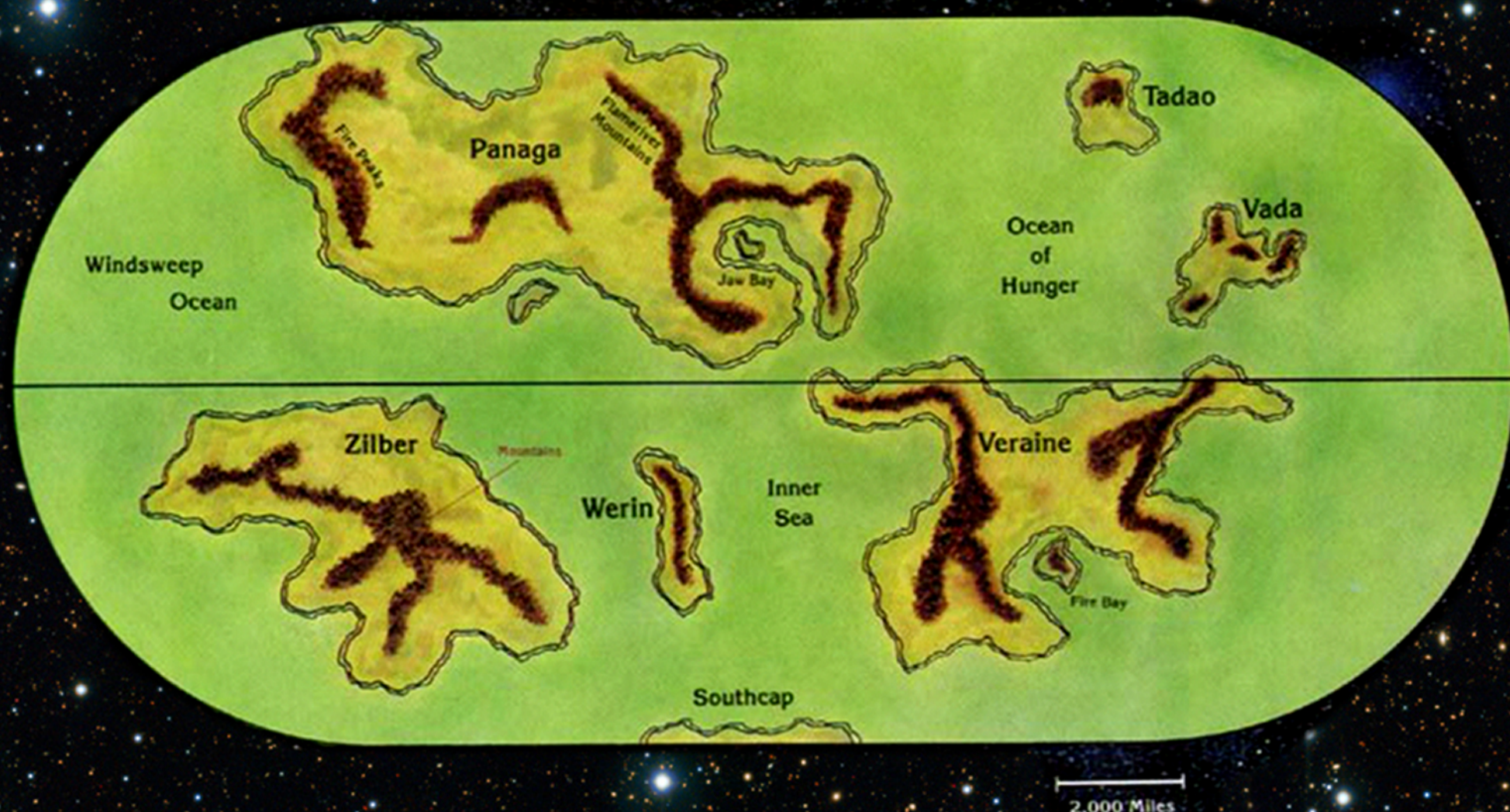
Darkside Sunside



FALX



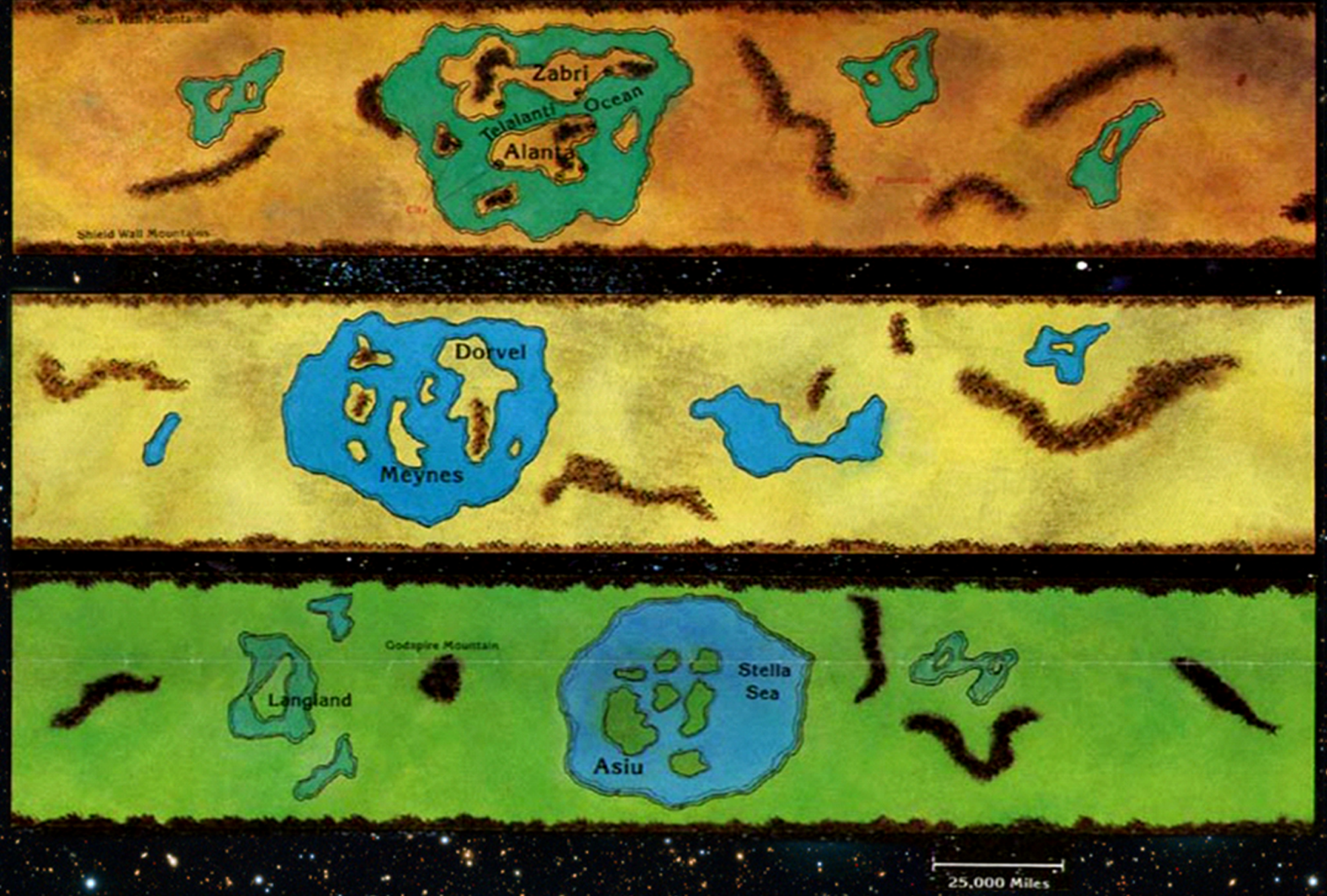
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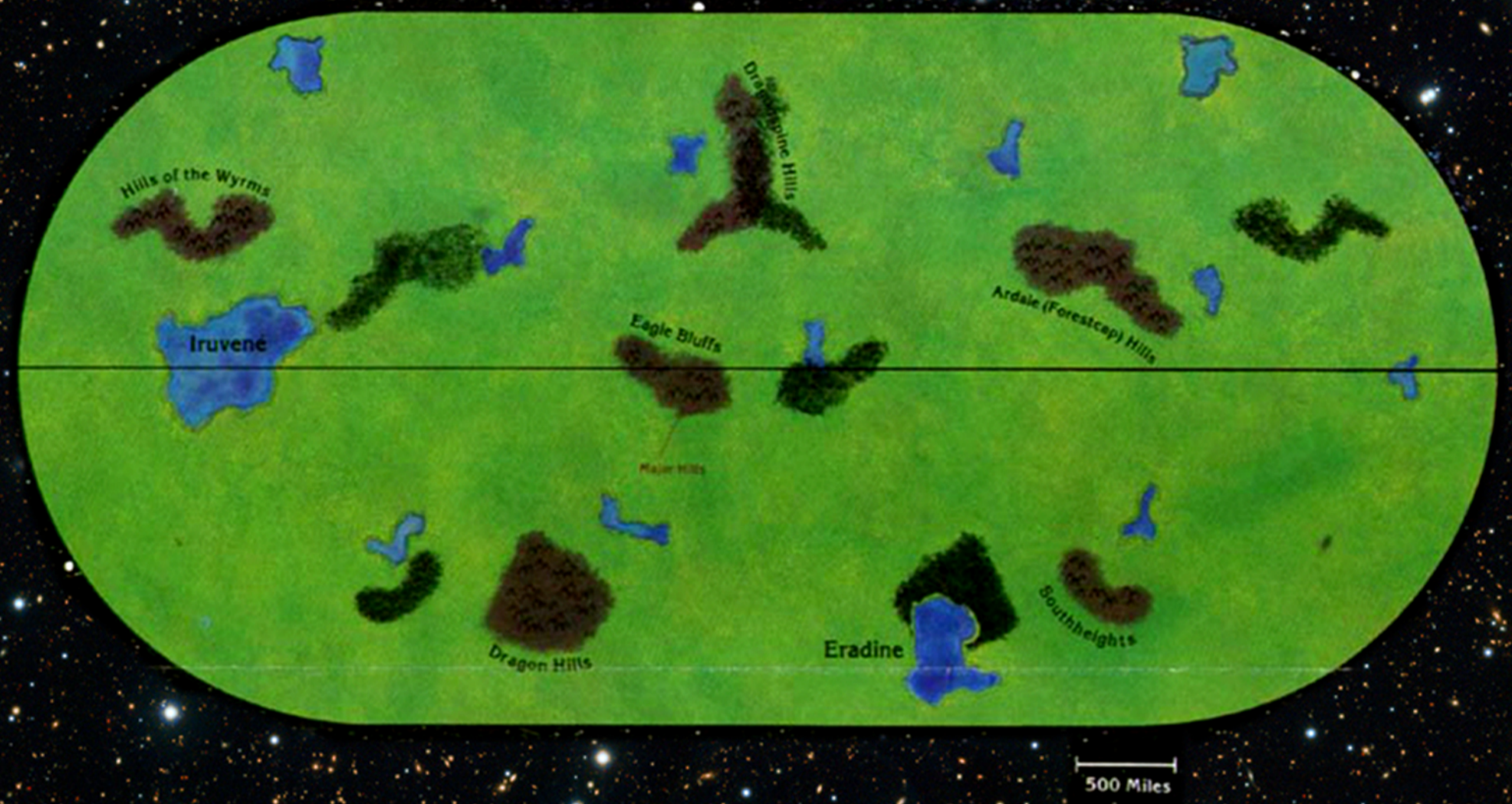
NIVIL (RING PLANET)

Mapping the ring planet represents a significant problem. The world is 283 million miles long, and only 50,000 miles wide. This means that the ring planet is 566 times longer than it is wide. In other words, if we were to draw a map of Nivil that is 1 inch wide, the map would have to be 566 inches — or 47 feet — long! A map that showed the entire length of the ring planet would be impossibly narrow, unable to reveal any detail.

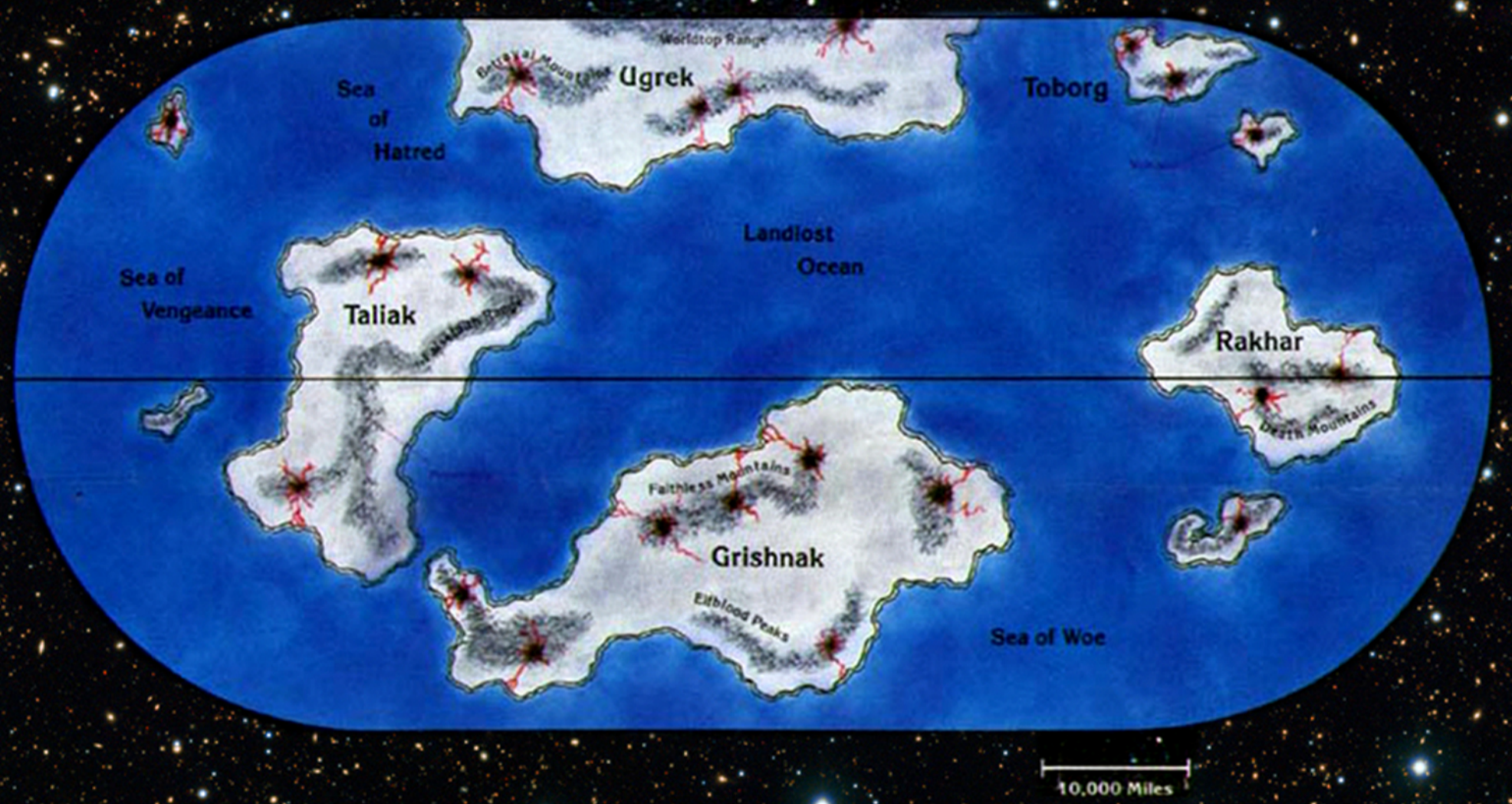
Instead, the accompanying maps show only certain sections of the ring planet. Considering that the ring planet has a surface area about 100,000 times that of Toril, these sections should give even the most militant explorers more than enough time to keep them busy...



BODI



ARMISTICE



PLATA (DISK WORLD)



Advanced Dungeons & Dragons
2nd Edition



Practical Planetology by Nigel Findley

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