

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®]

Immortal Game Adventure

The Immortal Storm

by Frank Mentzer



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Distributed to the book trade in the United States by Random House, Inc., and in Canada by Random House of Canada, Ltd. Distributed to the toy and hobby trade by regional distributors. Distributed in the United Kingdom by TSR (UK) Ltd.

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Player's Background

A withered old man clad in a blood-red robe floats in the air before a wall of white mist. As he squints and frowns, he reaches up with one gnarled hand and twiddles his flowing beard, as is his unconscious habit when deeply immersed in thought.

From his vantage point, Nyx—Hierarch of Entropy, supreme commander of all the destructive forces in the Multiverse—watches a swirling mass of incalculable size. It appears as a vast maelstrom, a swirling gray mass before him, stretching as far as he can see. Nyx knows full well that the maelstrom is infinite, so he does not bother to explore it further.

This is the Barrier, the inevitable destination of any traveler bold and powerful enough to pass beyond the realm of the five dimensions. The Barrier might be a gigantic whirlpool or hurricane, seen from above. But what irony; in the center, the "eye" of this false hurricane, is an actual huge humanoid eye, perhaps hundreds of thousands of miles across. It appeared only a few weeks ago, transforming the once impersonal gray swirl into a malevolent, deliberate force. As Nyx watches, the Eye stares back at him, unblinking.

The very sight would have driven any mortal man insane in an instant. But of course, a Hierarch is no coward; not even mortal, for that matter. Nyx stands at the opposite end of the spectrum of known life forms, an Immortal creature with the power to create or destroy worlds, stars, even whole planes of existence.

And as the baleful Eye gazes coldly at

him, Nyx is afraid.

Suppressing a shudder, the Hierarch keeps his position. Best not to reveal a weakness, for the others are due any minute. And they arrive only moments later, simply materializing beside him. Now five old men in simple robes face the great Eye.

"This chaos should be under my control, but is not," says Nyx sadly. "Are we all here? Let's try the commands again, just in case."

A pentagon of crackling flame appears, and the Immortals take their positions around its border.

"I, Noumena, Hierarch of Thought, command thee to begone. Let thy will, in this form, be quieted!"

"I, Khoronus, Hierarch of Time, command thee to begone. Let thy existence now reach its end!"

"I, Solarios, Hierarch of Energy, command thee to begone. Let this display of power be drained!"

"I, Djaea, Hierarch of Matter, command thee to begone. Let the substance of this mass be stilled!"

"I, Nyx, Hierarch of Entropy, command thee to begone. Let this storm pass, as do all things!"

Nothing changes. Nyx sighs, and says "Did any of you think of a new approach?"

"The dimensional ripples from this turbulence are starting to impede the magic of the multiverse!" blurts Solarios. "We must find a solution!"

"The storm-stuff is not matter as we

know it, and beyond Immortal control. I fear we are doomed," quavers Djaea.

"The era of Immortal rule may be nearing an end," says Khoronus. "Perhaps we should seek another realm, a new beginning...but where?"

"We've tried talking to it, but it has offered no response. At least, not yet. Let us keep a watch, and hope!" replies Noumena.

"Be my guest, Nous," Nyx retorts. "Meanwhile, I've got other work to do. Keep in touch."

Four of the Hierarchs vanish, shifting back into normal dimensional space. Noumena remains, still trying to communicate with the Eye of the storm.

The Party

Characters are not provided for this adventure. Each character, however, should be a Novice Temporal of one of the four PC Spheres. Each of the four Spheres should be represented. If five players are present, an extra Immortal of Energy is recommended. Additional players should be restricted to Spheres not yet duplicated, so that an even balance is present within the party.

Each character starts with an ability score of 20. Each character has 500 PP, 20 Hit Dice, 100 hp, and 50% A-M. Despite these similarities, the characters have entirely different options in Spheres and corresponding magical specialties, equipment carried (details following), and most important, personalities. Characters may be of any alignment and racial background.



The party also includes one NPC representative from the Sphere of Entropy. This being is not hostile. He cooperates in all ways, never interfering with the party's overall goals. His behavior is, of course, in the interests of his Sphere above all others when such actions do not interfere with the overall goals of the party. This Immortal should be played by you, the DM. Avoid relegating him to an uninteresting, non-participatory status; he is an important party member, a force to be reckoned with at all times.

This agent of Entropy is named Drekk. All his ability scores are 20 except for Charisma, which is only 10. He is generally known as a Winged Fury; refer to the DM Guide to Immortals, pages 29-36, for more details, under the specific heading of "Demon, Screaming." Drekk's magic use is limited to those effects costing 8 PP or less which are listed on page 53 of the previous reference.

NPC Parties

In the random encounter tables for Ethereal and Astral travel (see Appendix), encounters with mortal adventuring parties are indicated and quite possible. Before these can be used, the DM must spend some time creating and equipping the party. From four to seven mortal adventurers of levels 15-34 (1d20 + 14) are needed, each with appropriate equipment and spells.

The D&D® Master Set (DM book pages 3-5) gives some guidelines for the process of creating high level characters.

One very useful and entertaining option is to use mortal character personalities of the campaign from which the Immortal PCs arose, NPCs or even still-active player characters! If the latter, the DM may run this encounter with Immortals as part of that normal game, ideally having the players of the Immortal PCs take their mortal roles when needed, either for a brief time (a "cameo" role) or for an extended and integral part of the adventure.

The Immortals should not reveal their status to the mortals either by word or by special actions (such as Aura use), instead masquerading as mortal adventurers, undefined other-planar beings, or anything else convenient to the circumstances. However a masquerade is impossible if mortals are met on the Astral Plane as Immortals are easily identified by their three-dimensionality. Immortals do not voluntarily reveal their status or details of their own adventure, nor will they invite the mortal adventurers to accompany them. On the other hand, the Immortals may indeed go with and aid the mortals on their

adventure. They should do so, in fact, if both invited and if the mortals intend to stop a threat to either their homeworld or to the Prime Plane itself. The Immortal PCs' tasks are not pressing enough to supercede the primary goal of all Immortals, the preservation of the Prime.

Movement

The party will probably travel in their normal forms, visibly (to keep their A-M in effect) and using standard movement procedures, at 120' (40') walking or 360' (120') by non-magical flight. Characters may choose otherwise, of course. You may need to modify random encounter details, reactions of others, and so forth to account for PC actions.

Elemental Dominance

When characters associate with mortal elemental creatures, remember to apply the rules of elemental dominance as presented in the D&D® Companion Set (DMC page 20). Briefly, these are the rules:

Air is dominant over Water.
Water is dominant over Fire.
Fire is dominant over Earth.
Earth is dominant over Air.
Air and Fire are in opposition.
Earth and Water are in opposition.

When a creature or magical effect is based on one of the four elements, dominance results in double damage. The victim may make a saving throw vs. Spells to take normal damage. A creature who is dominant over another creature or over a magical effect automatically takes the minimum possible damage from it. Opposition does not affect damage, but creatures in opposition are usually hostile; a -4 penalty applies to reaction rolls, or -8 if the creatures are also ethically opposed (good vs. evil).

Astral and Ethereal Travel

During their adventures, the PCs must travel through the Ethereal Plane. This definitely occurs when they pass to and from the Elemental Planes of fire and earth (in parts 2 and 5, respectively). When in this plane, the party encounters at least one wandering creature, and possibly several.

The party travels in the Astral Plane frequently. This is required every time they retrieve a part of their goal, and also when they visit the Outer Planes of the tonals, notions, and a mysterious technological society (parts 3, 4, and 6). The party's fastest

mode of travel when returning is obviously to enter the Astral Plane and use a magical astral teleport to speed back to their starting point. This is not as easy when the party is heading out; the characters have only a general description of the planes they seek, and their approximate, but not exact, locations. Thus, an astral teleport will be helpful, but will not send them directly to their destination. Some non-magical travel is required.

The Astral and Ethereal Planes have neutral bias toward Immortals of all spheres. Within it, the characters regenerate Power, hit, and ability score points at the rate of 1 point per turn.

Roll 1d12 and 1d100 to determine the number of encounters and specific creatures, and refer to the appropriate tables in the Appendix. The details and probable actions of the creatures are given after the tables.

Test of the Hierarchs

Together once again, the Hierarchs sit in a row at one side of a small chamber. Instead of facing a huge storm, they now face this group of Temporals, newly arrived Immortals freshly graduated from Initiate status that they have summoned. Noumena is speaking.

"...And then after a while, I noticed that the maelstrom was growing because the Eye was emitting more storm clouds. And then I realized that they were appearing in a pattern. I read a message therein:"

*Through the testaments, I call us gods.
Shall ghosts guide men to teach Trust?
He that called eight monstrous gusts
gets the last laugh! Orcs mounted this
deathstorm clue—Thought sings least.*

*Sense of Wrong? First teach same.
Sense of Morals fade. Count on.
Sense of Action, to men of tears;
Sense of Humor, the other colder fact.
Sense of Honor? Collect my gems, elf!*

"Bizarre, is it not, my young friends? If I am not mistaken, some malevolent intelligence has brought forth the deathstorm, but has offered us a chance to redeem ourselves, if we have the wit to do so. Well, can you make sense of it?"

Part 1: The Storm of the Eye

The Starting Puzzle

Some time before the game begins, give the players the background. Their first task is to figure out the riddle of the message. As this may take an hour or more, reveal the puzzle some time before the game, perhaps even a day or two in advance.

If your players do not enjoy puzzles, or have little talent for them, you may wish to help them.

Any character may make a standard Intelligence check to gain a clue to the puzzle. Do not suggest this unless the players seem unable to solve it. If the players are not familiar with the rules for play at Immortal level, you might remind them that by working together, their characters can apply their combined Intelligence scores toward the check.

To make such a check, find the character's Intelligence score (or the total of the scores of cooperating characters) and roll 1d100. If the roll is equal to or less than the ability score or total, reveal one clue. If the players have already deduced the information given in a clue, ignore that clue and reveal the next one on the list.

A character should be given only one clue for a successful Intelligence check. Since each character has an Intelligence score of 20, five characters could combine their scores to get 100% chance for one clue but no others, or may each take a chance (at 20% success) at a separate clue. However, if the players are completely befuddled, you may allow a Wisdom check for a clue (in the same manner), and you may thus allow two checks per character instead of one. If necessary, you may even allow successful use of *wishes* to gain clues.

Reveal the following clues in order according to the procedures that you use.

Puzzle Clues

A. The puzzle as a whole

1. The stilted phraseology and odd words (such as the last line) suggest that all the letters in the puzzle are an anagram. Unscramble the letters (presumably of each line, in turn) to find the solution.

B. First stanza

2. Each of the first five lines contains the same 31 letters. Unscramble any one of them to find the solution to the entire first stanza.
3. Though many verbs can be formed by the

letters, a definite action (such as "get" or "gather") is a good starting point.

4. None of the words given in the first stanza appear in the solution to that section.

B. Second stanza

5. Things mentioned in the first stanza are repeated in the second.
6. The Hierarchs asked you to make sense of these lines, which talk about senses of various sorts.
7. The words "essence of" can be formed in each line.

The Solution

Gather sight, sound, taste, touch, smell.

(Repeats 4 more times.)

Essence of sight from a new star.

Essence of sound from a Tonal.

Essence of taste from a Notion.

Essence of touch from the Earthlord.

Essence of smell from technology.

The council of Hierarchs has already solved the puzzle, of course. They are now engaged in testing various Temporals, and plan to send those who display sufficient ingenuity on an epic quest. All the other Temporals tested have failed, and of course the player characters are the ones chosen. As the players complete each line of the solution, verify their success. The council of Hierarchs does likewise for the PC Immortals.

The Hierarchs have sent their most powerful Eternals to gather the five things mentioned in the puzzle. Their attempts have not been successful, but have yielded one last bit of wordplay, a final clue: *innocents and innocence*. The council has decided that where sheer Immortal power has failed, mere fledgling Temporals may succeed. And again, they are correct.

When the player characters have solved the puzzle, the Hierarchs have some additional information about the five things mentioned in the second stanza. These are explained at the end of the following section, to be revealed just before you start the game.

Notes for the DM

Goals & Objectives

The primary objective of the player characters is to save the multiverse by gathering the essences of five senses and returning them to the Hierarchs.

To make it possible for the PCs to recover such elusive substances, the Hierarchs give them five living artifacts, each roughly the size and shape of a dagger. The artifacts have no powers at all, but also lack all normal senses. Each has a simple sheath. When the sharp tip of any dagger artifact is touched to an essence for which the PCs seek, the artifact absorbs that essence and stores it safely. When it absorbs an essence, a dagger artifact glows brightly. The essence of a sense is different from a simple manifestation of that sense. A dagger, for example, will not simply absorb a smell, but only the very essence of smells.

The mission is critical but need not be rushed. The storm has been brewing for several weeks, and will not reach multiversally devastating proportions for a few months. The PCs thus have ample time to not only complete their task, but to observe the general goals of the Immortals as they do so—to be the caretakers of the Prime Plane and the potentially Immortal creatures within it, to protect and develop their respective Spheres, and to explore and develop the multiverse itself.

The characters start the adventure within one of the many outer planes, immediately after their meeting with the council of Hierarchs. They may seek the five essences in any order they choose. They should return one dagger (and the essence contained therein) to the council after each part of the quest, though they may certainly choose to carry them all around for the duration. To do so risks the loss of the artifact, of course, but is technically allowed.

Do not use the cover as a DM screen. It contains maps that the players can use later in the adventure. Lay the cover flat on the table when the adventurers reach the appropriate sections, so the players can see the maps.

Starting

When you are ready to begin the game, reveal the following details about the PCs' primary objectives to the players. All this information is given to the characters by the council of Hierarchs.

Obtaining the essence of sight is the first goal. A "new star" arises in only one way—by a gate from the Elemental Plane of Fire to some other plane of existence, in such a way that the fire condenses into a blazing globe. There is a region of the Prime Plane in which this occurs regularly, at the center of a galaxy. Before gathering the compact essence of such a star, permission must first be obtained from the Elemaster of Fire, who is generally

friendly, but unpredictable.

Only the race of tonals can help with the second goal, obtaining the essence of sound, and only the race of notions with the third, obtaining the essence of taste. The Hierarchs give the PCs directions to the respective Home Planes of these creatures.

The fourth goal, obtaining the essence of touch, is a direct reference to the Elemaster of the Elemental Plane of Earth. This being is a petty and stubborn sort, and the PCs are warned to proceed with caution in pursuing and dealing with him.

The fifth goal, obtaining the essence of smell, is the key and the most puzzling part of all. In some few outer planes, a lack of dimensions has resulted in a corresponding lack of magic. Those very rare races which have developed any degree of civilization in these planes have based their developments on mechanical things, and call this "technol-

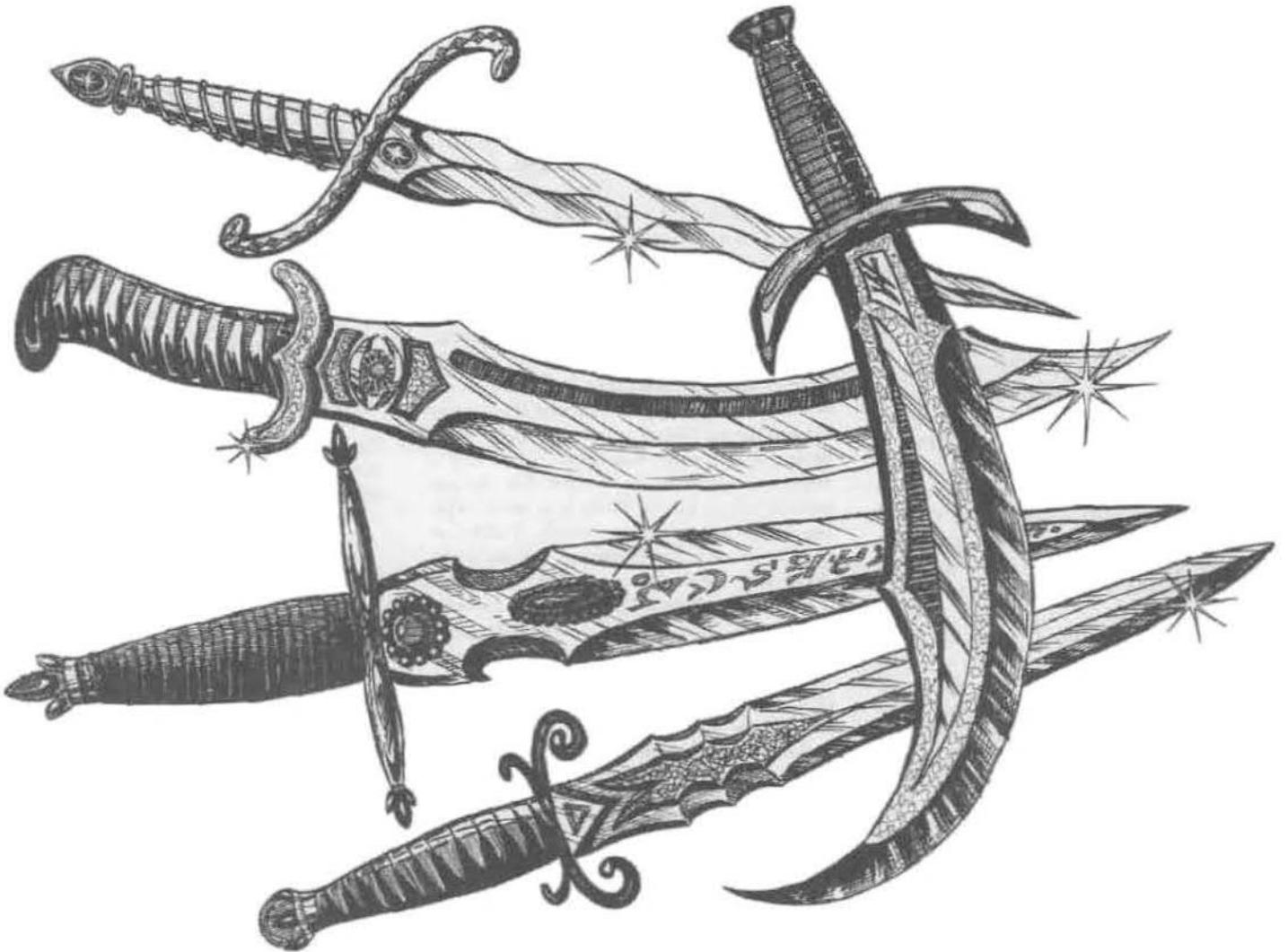
ogy." It is a weird and horrible state of life, to be sure, but therein seems to lie the fifth and final piece of the puzzle. To gain it, the PCs must enter a triplane, a stuffy three-dimensional space in which no magic is usable. And if they succeed in their quest, they must find a non-magical exit, or be forever trapped within a dirty, primitive society! The Hierarchs offer directions to the most advanced of the known technological civilizations among the outer planes, and urge the utmost caution and ingenuity in this final and most dangerous leg of the journey.

All standard Immortal practices should be observed; the PCs should not reveal their Immortal status to any mortal, and should masquerade as mortal humans in most circumstances. Other Immortals may be openly dealt with, assuming that appropriate caution is exercised. The PCs are mere Temporals, and the desires of all higher Immortals

have priority.

To complete the masquerade, the PCs are offered non-magical clothing and typical human equipment, the magical weaponry that plane-traveling mortals might be expected to have (players' choice, although the arms should not be used except to maintain the facade), a few minor magic items (DM's choice) and some gems and coins to complete the setup.

Allow the players to discuss their situation, and to choose their first objective. The adventure can be played in any order, however, Part 6 should be played last as it is the most difficult. When everyone is ready, turn to the section that applies to their choice, and begin the quest!



Part 2: A Star is Born

To start this part of the adventure, the characters are given accurate directions to a place on the Prime Plane at which new stars are formed—the exact center of the galaxy of the mortal PC homeworld. The essence of sight can be obtained by capturing five cubic inches of freshly made starfire.

Before they can do this, the characters must get permission from the Elemaster of Fire, who of course resides on the Elemental Plane of Fire. The location of this plane is well-known to all Immortals, including the PCs. The characters must travel through the Ethereal Plane to get there, whatever their current location, and probably the Astral as well. Refer to the random encounter charts for minor events during the journey.

When the characters approach the Plane of Fire in the Ether, they see it as a very large globe of pinkish-silvery color. They can cross the planar boundary by the usual means, either by a simple 50 PP expenditure or by magic (*gate*, *plane travel*, etc.). Upon entering, they arrive in open space.

The Elemental Plane of Fire

Arrival

The party arrives in a totally empty region of the Elemental Plane. The scene is identical to that in most of the Prime Plane, with thousands of visible stars hanging in inky-black space.

If the party decides to proceed toward one of the stars, warn them that none appear very close, and were they to persist in normal corporeal travel, the journey could take many years (about 32, in fact, to the closest star). Although no undue haste is needed, that is definitely too long to spend traveling. They cannot travel incorporeally, for that would mean abandoning their material forms and possessions, and they would be unable to complete their goals. They must therefore use magic (a *teleport* spell by each) to travel to a star.

Before they do so, the PCs should use a *wish* or some other means to gain a clue to the proper destination. If they do, they automatically learn the location of the home star of the Elemaster (many, many light years away) and can *teleport* to that vicinity without error or delay. If they choose a visible nearby star, it is the wrong one.

Whatever star they choose, ask the players whether the characters intend to *teleport* directly into the star, or to a point nearby. If the latter, ask how far away from the surface of the star, in miles. If the PCs try to *teleport*

into a star, the effect malfunctions slightly, and they arrive about 100 miles away from its outer surface.

All the PCs, including those of Energy, should activate magical fire protections before this *teleport*. Remind the players that the stars are hot if it does not occur to them first, but do not insist that they take protective measures. The choice is theirs. Such actions would require them to drop their natural Anti-Magic (or risk quick removal of the spell effects). Standard magical fire protection can be increased via *wishes* to function even when exposed to the heat of a star's surface.

Starworld

The fiery globes originally visible in the distance are not actual stars. They are condensed "planets" of fire, mostly of the temperature of normal fire. Any sort of fire protection blocks all damage. Exposure to the fire causes only 3-18 points of damage per round.

The PCs arrive either 100 miles away from the surface of the star (if intending to penetrate it immediately) or whatever distance they specified. At this range, the difference between the fiery orb and a normal star is immediately obvious. This appears to be nothing more than a large ball of fire, much cooler and less turbulent than a star on the Prime or other plane. Even at a range of only 1 mile from the surface, the PCs feel no heat from it.

As the PCs head toward the starworld, they realize that it is very similar to a planet covered entirely by an ocean—but the ocean is made of flame. They descend from space toward the surface of a planet, a globe made of fire, that appears inhabited. About half of the starworld is made of solid fire, though some is indeed liquid. There is no way to visibly tell which parts are which. Unlike an earthen planet, the starworld has no continents and oceans, but rather isolated pools and islands scattered throughout its surface.

If the PCs use magic to change themselves into fire-type creatures, their arrival and subsequent travel passes unobserved. They are otherwise regularly stopped or attacked by fire creatures.

The party may choose to travel in the hot fiery atmosphere, walk on or wade in the fiery liquid, or swim below the surface. At the point of their arrival on the starworld, the PCs can see 1-20 life forms nearby (see *Encounters*).

Encounters

The following incidents occur randomly only if the PCs maintain their standard forms, without masquerading as fire-beings. One encounter occurs every 3 turns (1/2 hour), starting a mere minute or two after their arrival. The encounters occur whether the PCs are flying, walking, or swimming. Roll 1d20 to determine the creature encountered.

If the PCs seek out local residents, whether in standard form or masquerading, they are escorted to see the local elemental ruler, and eventually to the Elemaster (*The Firemaster*). Select or randomly determine the types of creatures available from the following encounter chart. The life forms visible in the area include pillars, balls, cubes, and humanoids made of fire (all elementals), fire giants (actually fire drakes), huge rings of fire rolling slowly across the landscape (helions), and possibly long strings of light (flickers) or a phoenix, though the latter two are much rarer than the others and the phoenix is unintelligent, and merely flees.

Starworld Encounter Chart

1d20	Creature Encountered	Number App.	Ref
1-11	Elemental	1-6	C40
12	Elemental ruler	1	M40
13-14	Firedrakes	3-6	M30
15	Flickers	2	I40
16-18	Helion	1-4	C40
19	Salamanders	3-12	X55
20	Phoenix	1	M41

Details of Starworld Encounters

Elemental: AC 5 to -10; HD 1 to 32; MV 360' (120'); AT 1 blow; D by HD (1-2 to 10-80); Save F = creature's HD; THAC0 varies; ML 9; Int 3-18; AL N

Refer to the Companion set (DM's book, page 40) for a full chart of the possible sizes of elementals, with their corresponding Armor Class and Damage per attack.

An elemental appears to be one of several possible forms—a pillar, humanoid, ball, cube, or other shape. Any form is made entirely of flame, 1 foot tall per Hit Die.

The elementals may be hostile; the chance is 100% minus 5% per Hit Die of the creature. If not aggressive, the elemental will still belligerently inform the PCs that they are trespassing without permission, and demand an explanation. All of this is delivered in the crackling, roaring fire elemental language, of course, so the PCs must take appropriate

measures if they wish to understand or respond.

If the PCs slay any elementals, the act is seen by 2-8 others within 300 yards, some of which immediately depart to warn the local elemental ruler.

If the PCs ask to be taken to someone in authority, the elementals cooperate fully, but probably assume an attitude as if it were a policeman taking criminals to justice. The PCs are taken to see the local elemental ruler, a trip that takes no longer than 2 hours.

Elemental ruler: AC -13; HD 60 (hp 410); MV 120' (40'); AT 2 fists; D 10-120 each; Save F = creature's HD; THAC0 -2; Int 18; AL N

See *The Elemental Ruler* for details of this encounter.

Firedrakes (3-6): AC 0; HD 6****; MV 120' (40'); AT 1 club; D 2-12; Save MU12; THAC0 13; ML 9; Int 10; AL N; XP 1,175 each

The drakes maintain fire giant form while on this plane, though they can also appear as *man-sized dragon-like creatures*. They are completely immune to all spell effects of 4th level (8 PP base) or less. They all have the abilities of 5th level thieves. If the party approaches the drakes peacefully, asking for information or directions, the opportunity may come (a 40% chance) for one of the drakes to steal a dagger artifact. If the chance occurs, the drake's attempt automatically succeeds. Previous PC actions—such as using *wishes* to protect against theft or loss of the artifacts, or even exceptionally careful storage—may prevent or modify this chance, at the DM's discretion.

If a drake's theft is successful, the creatures offer accurate directions to the nearest elemental ruler (up to 2 hours distant), but do not accompany the PCs. If no opportunity for crime arises, the drakes claim no knowledge of the local bureaucracy, but instead invite the PCs to accompany them in search of fire gems. If the party agrees to this for some reason, the drakes capriciously lead them on a 20-hour jaunt across the fiery landscape, avoiding all other life forms and searching in vain for any material objects of value.

Flicker (1-2): SP Energy; PP 500 each; A-M 100%; AC None; HD 9; MV up to 12 miles; AT/D None; ML 9; Int 24; AL C; XP 8,600 each

These friendly creatures appear as strands of multi-colored light, one forming a circle and another a figure-eight within the circle. They can use all forms of Power combat, but

cannot produce magical effects. They are completely immune to all magic except fire-type, which either cures them or increases their Power totals. They communicate by the patterns of their movements.

The flickers use Power to probe the PCs, and will discover their status. If asked for guidance or directions, they gladly comply if paid. The cost of their service is not energy or fire; they have plenty around them. Instead, they ask that two of the PCs (one character per flicker) swear to perform some proportionate service for them in the future. They have no specific idea of the service, but simply want Immortal aid to be readily available should they require it. If two PCs agree to this, the flickers will ask their names (at least one each) and also carefully study their Auras for later identification, if necessary.

Helion (1-4): AC 1; HD 9*; MV 90' (30'), flying 240' (80'); AT 1 grasp; D 2-16; Save F9; THAC0 11; ML 9; Int 15; AL L; XP 1,600 each

Helions appear as giant rings of flame, 20 feet in diameter. They are extremely good and shun violence, being famed philosophers and negotiators. They are immune to poison, normal weapons, all 1st and 2nd level spells (all effects costing 4 PP or less), and earth-based attacks. At will, they can *detect invisible*, *detect magic*, *dispel magic* and use *will of fire*, and can cast *earth to fire* 3 times per day. They can also control fire, changing it to solid, liquid, or gaseous form at will.

These creatures are quite friendly, and aid the PCs as requested without asking for payment of any sort. While escorting the characters to the local elemental ruler, they no doubt discover the high intelligence of the PCs through conversation, and try to get into an involved discussion speculating about the causes of the odd dimensional shift that occurs when entering the Astral Plane (which the characters see as soon as they enter the plane). They have not been there themselves, but have carefully interrogated human travelers on the subject, and the topic fascinates them.

Salamanders (3-12): AC 2; HD 8; MV 120' (40'); AT 2 claws/1 bite; D 1-4/1-4/1-8; Save F8; THAC0 12; ML 8; Int 2; AL N; XP 1,200 each

This predatory snake-like lizard is immune to fire, and radiates normal fire to a 20-foot radius (D 1-8 per round).

Salamanders travel in packs, searching for easy prey. Though they may attack the PCs, they are easily scared off.

Phoenix, lesser (1): AC 2; HD 9; MV 90' (30'), flying 360' (120'); AT 2 claws/1 bite; D 1-6/1-6/2-12; Save F10; THAC0 11; ML 9; Int 6; AL N; XP 4,400 (per death)

This bird radiates magical fire to a 10-foot radius, which inflicts 3-18 point of damage per round regardless of standard magical protections against fire. It is immune to *charm*, *hold*, and all fire-based spells. When slain, it explodes in a 20-foot radius (D 5-50, again disregarding protections; save vs. *Breath* for half damage). If subjected to a Power attack, it instinctively uses a *Wrap* and teleports 36,000 feet in a randomly determined direction.

The phoenix flees if approached, and is of no help now.

The Elemental Ruler

This being appears as a bipedal humanoid made entirely of flame. He is 120 feet tall, and is seated upon a huge throne of flame which is situated deep within a bowl-shaped depression in the surface, so that only his upper torso is visible from a distance. For statistics, if needed, refer to the random encounter details.

The local ruler is busy with the usual matters, at this time judging several errant types. The PCs must ask for an audience by talking with one of several bailiffs, each of which is a normal elemental of 30 Hit Dice (30 feet tall). By mentioning that their business is urgent, or alluding to their important status, the PCs can gain admittance right after the current case is finished.

Most of the beings waiting to see the ruler are elementals, though one efreeti, a group of four humans (apparently clerics), and a pair of helions are also in attendance. None speak to the PCs, and hiss at any attempt at conversation, explaining if necessary that the bailiffs will put them at the end of the line for talking out of turn in the presence of the ruler.

The ruler finishes the current proceedings by lifting one great fist and smashing it down on the elemental before it. The poor creature is shattered into 24 pieces, each of which turns into an independent, but small, elemental and scurries off.

One bailiff rushes over and converses briefly with the great one, and the ruler then turns, looks at the PCs, and says in a booming voice (in its own tongue) "WELL?"

The PCs must explain their situation briefly. All the other creatures waiting in line glare at them, begrudging every second they must wait. The ruler does not call the Elementar without good reason, so some details

Part 2: A Star is Born

of the PCs' mission must be revealed. The ruler does not adjourn his court nor goes to a private place for conversation, but the PCs may either fly up to the royal car or be lifted on one great palm if some measure of secrecy is desired (which is certainly advisable if the PCs wish to avoid both lying to the creature and completely revealing their status).

If and when sufficient reason is given to the elemental ruler, he grunts and tells them that the Master has been summoned, and they can wait. After about 2 turns (during which the ruler continues his business), a small elemental approaches the PCs, announces that it is to lead them to the Elemaster (Firemaster), and escorts them away.

The Firemaster

The small elemental is only 2 feet tall. It escorts the PCs away from the ruler's court, flying about 3 feet above the surface of the fiery ocean for 10 minutes, until the group is well away from all other life forms, in an apparently uninhabited area. The escort then lands, and indicates that the PCs should do the same. The fire in this region is solid, and can be walked upon easily.

The small fire-servant then turns to the party and says "Well, you wanted to see me. Who are you, and what's your problem?"

If the PCs are sceptical and demand proof of the being's status, he repeats his question, but using Aura communication. He is indeed the Firemaster himself.

An absolute test to prove the elemental's claim is for one PC to cast a *wish*. It utterly fails unless the Firemaster grants it, for he is the master and lord of this entire plane of existence, and as such has the ability to rule on such matters.

The Firemaster uses Power to probe the PCs, discovering what he can. He demands to know their names, spheres, and true purpose. This is quite permissible, as the Elemaster is one of the Immortals, and the imposition of secrecy with regard to such status applies only to relations with mortals. The Firemaster has carefully positioned himself and the party well away from all prying eyes and ears, and has even magically blocked the immediate area from detection by the great rulers themselves.

After the PCs reveal their goal—to obtain 5 cubic inches of fresh starstuff, and to gain the essence of sight from it—the Firemaster thinks a bit, and then says that he has the solution. However, the PCs must force him to reveal it, by besting him in a rough-and-tumble fight. If the party wins, he helps them. If not, they must return to the Hier-

archs and confess their abject defeat. The rules state that all forms of punching and wrestling are allowed, but no weapons, magic, or Power, or ability score combat.

If the PCs refuse the fight, the Firemaster calls them cowards and refuses to offer his solution to the problem. He does, however, note that only he knows exactly where the new stars form, and that they are extremely hot—so hot that the material instantly incinerates anything nearby, regardless of all protections.

Elemaster: SP Energy; RK Hierarch 2; PP 12,000; A-M 90%; AC -18; HD 42 (hp 800)

Each of the Firemaster's ability scores is 75, and his Wrestling Rating is 82. (Each PC should have a WR of about 33.) Counting his Strength bonus, the Firemaster hits AC -25 if his Hit roll is a 2.

When using multiple wrestlers of Immortal status, the WR bonus to the group leader should not be merely +1 or +5, but rather a bonus of 1/4 of the additional creature's WR, rounded down. For example, if each PC's WR is 33, the total WR for 2 characters is 33 + 8, or 41.

For striking, a punch inflicts a number of dice of damage (1d6 each) equal to the fighter's Strength modifier. If the punch hits, roll 1d100 and subtract the victim's Constitution score. If the total is 1 or more, the victim is stunned for 1 round, and must save vs. Physical Attack or be knocked out for a number of rounds equal to the previous total (1d100 minus Constitution).

The Firemaster will "pull" his punches at the start of the battle, inflicting only 18 points each (not 18d6) and not causing any knockouts. He instead relies on his wrestling ability. The PCs are under no such compulsion, even in fairness. If the Elemaster is reduced to 500 hp or less, he throws full normal punches from then on. When you roll to determine damage, however, round any result of 100 points or more down to 99, to increase chances of PC survival.

The characters may defeat the Firemaster if they manage to strike frequently enough, with a 25% chance per hit of getting a stun (since his Constitution is 75) and possibly knocking him out. However, the odds are not good, partially because of his high Armor Class (requiring a 20 to hit, though the PCs' Strength bonuses apply) and his saving throw vs. knockout (a 2).

The Firemaster will concede the fight if reduced to 100 hp or less. He tries to avoid slaying any of the PCs if possible, noting any-

one who appears severely damaged (to 25 hp or less) and warning them to stay away or he'll "let 'em have it!"

The large amounts of damage that will be inflicted in this battle can be easily cured by relatively small Power expenditures. The Firemaster will not use a *cureall* on himself during the fight, though the PCs may do so for themselves, and will probably need the spell to stay in the battle long enough to win.

If the Firemaster knocks out all the PCs, he simply lines them up and waits for them to regain consciousness. All he desires is a good fight and it does not matter if the PCs win or lose. He will aid the party when the battle is over. He first explains the following details (after curing himself of all damage).

The fresh starfire is very hot and very dense. At nearly 20,000 degrees Fahrenheit (11,000 Centigrade), it will burn any material object instantly, including Immortal bodies and even their dagger artifacts, with no saving throw and despite any sort of fire resistance. Furthermore, 5 cubic inches of this condensed material weighs about 6 tons.

The Firemaster reveals a time and place on the Prime Plane at which the star-fire arrives. He suggests that the PCs use shields of phoenix feathers to block the heat (albeit temporarily), then use *telekinesis* augmented by *wishes** to capture a small block of starfire as it appears, and finally to hurl it at one of the dagger artifacts. The brief contact with the latter should preserve its magic (though it is slightly melted in the process), and it should capture the essence of sight in the process.

* Unmodified *telekinesis* can move 20 pounds per level of the caster, or 800 pounds per character. Each *wish* adds a like amount of capacity (to 1,600 pounds with one *wish*, 2,400 pounds with two, etc.). The 12,000-pound total weight should be movable by combined PC efforts.

This plan (or a minor variation thereof) is the only way to succeed. Multiple *wishes* might be used alone to decrease the heat damage and move the starfire, but dozens would be needed, beyond the capacity of the PCs.

To use this plan, however, phoenix feathers are needed. The Firemaster thus gives his permission for the party to go on a phoenix hunt. He knows where at least one greater phoenix is located. It may be captured or killed, but all of its feathers are needed to make enough shields for all the PCs. (The feathers from one greater phoenix will suffice, whatever the number of characters.)

To Catch a Phoenix

The Firemaster does not help chase the phoenix, but aids in the creation of the special protective shields after the hunt is completed.

The hunt is complex, but the PCs can prevail by using all their skill. Every known magical power is at their disposal, and *wishes* fill in the gaps. The chase should be difficult, but by repeatedly slaying the creature, drawing off its Power, and pursuing it despite its repeated *teleports*, the characters should eventually kill the bird. Its capture is probably impossible for characters of this level, and involves much more complex strategies. The party should have no random encounters during the hunt.

The chase takes place on the surface of the starworld. The DM may elaborate at will on terrain details, but the tallest mountain on the planet is 30 feet high, and the largest lake is 15 feet deep with a surface area of 1,000 square feet. No vegetation is present. The previously noted life forms are the only residents; no efreet live on this world.

Greater Phoenix: SP Energy; PP 200; AC -2; HD 18 (hp 120); MV 150' (50'), flying 450' (150'); AT 2 claws/1 bite; D 2-12/2-12/4-24; THAC0 6; Int 8; AL N; XP 22,375 (2.2 PP)

The phoenix stands 10 feet tall, with a 25-foot wingspread. By expending 1 PP per round (which it regenerates immediately), it radiates a special fire with a 20-foot radius, causing 6-36 points of damage per round to any creature within it, regardless of standard magical protections against fire. It is immune to all type of *fire*, *charm*, *hold*, and weapons of less than +3 enchantment.

If subjected to a Power attack, the phoenix instinctively uses a *Wrap* and *teleports* itself 36,000 feet in a random direction (cost 5 PP). If its body is slain, the creature is surrounded by a burst of flame (D 10-100, save vs. Breath for half) and is immediately resurrected with full hit points. This process uses 5 PP which do not regenerate for 24 hours.

Epilogue: Prime Plane

All the PCs resume their original forms upon entering the Prime Plane, and thus become very vulnerable.

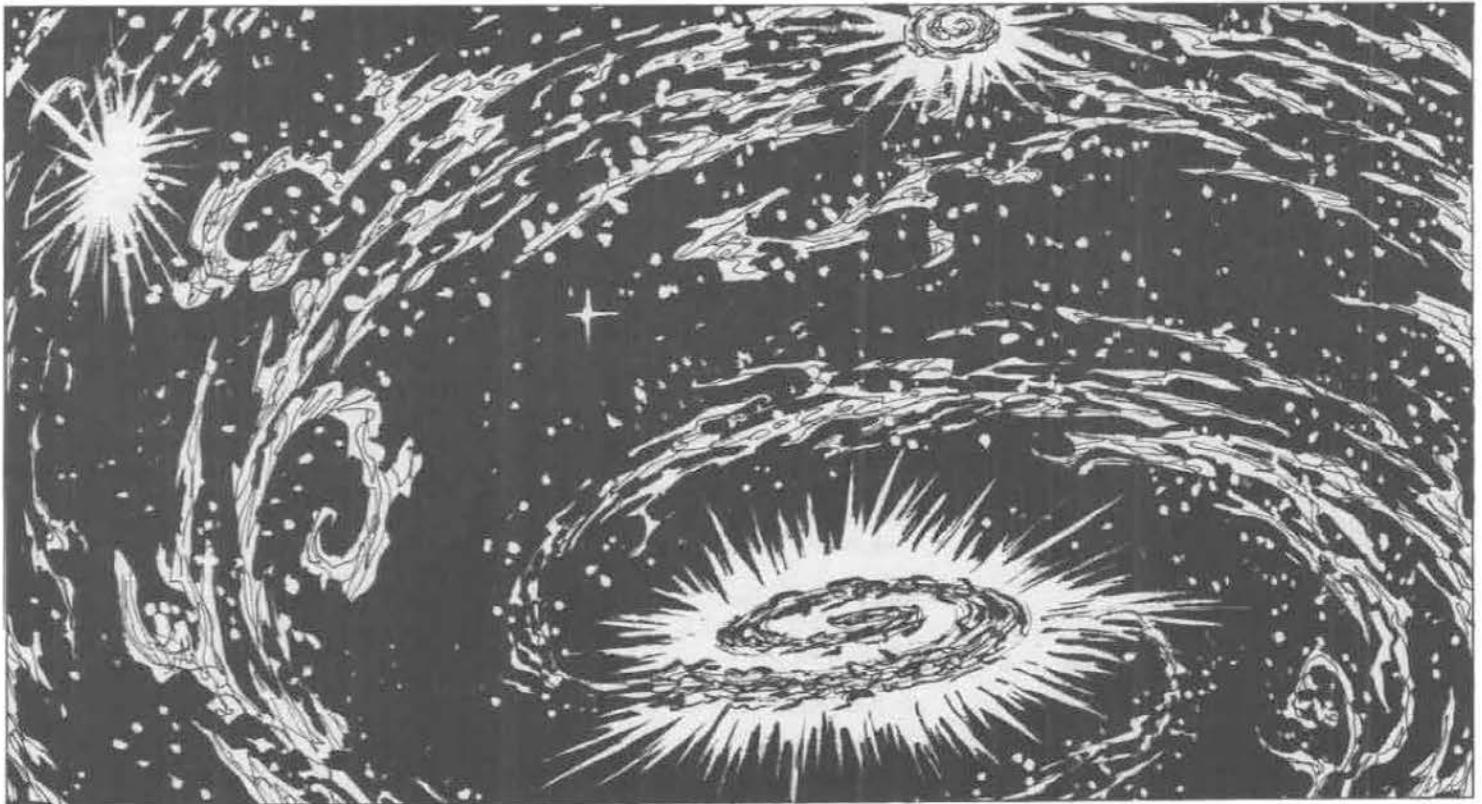
All goes according to plan. The view of the galaxy from its center is stunning. Thousands of stars speckle the sky, dense as weeds compared to the sparse lights in the space of the mortals' homeworld. Stellar matter flows under incredible gravitational forces, form-

ing arched swirls and clouds of brilliant fire.

Near the center of the galaxy, amid a few dozen nearby stars, the party waits—and there, in the named location at the proper time, comes a sudden blackness, the warping of space itself. And then suddenly, a speck of brilliant light, with intense and immediate heat of unimaginable intensity appears. The Gate has opened.

The dagger artifact floats nearby, ready to receive its precious cargo. Keeping their shields up, the PCs must jointly use their augmented *telekinesis* to grasp a small blob of the newly created material. The new star's small gravity tugs at the characters, but they can resist it easily. Soon the ever inflowing star-fire poses a greater and deadlier force, but it is hoped the party will be gone by then.

The star-fire, propelled by mighty Immortal magic, strikes the dagger and continues onward, a speck of wanton fire among great stars. It is quickly absorbed by a giant neighbor. The dagger is partially melted, but aglow, indicating the success of the operation. To avoid the deadly fire, the party should swiftly leave this area, departing into the Ether and heading back to the council of Hierarchs to deliver this part of their greater goal.



Part 3: The Sound of Music

To start this part of the adventure, the Hierarchs give the characters accurate directions to the Home Plane of the race of tonals, one of the Outer Planes. The Hierarchs do not know where the essence of sound is located, but the tonals should, and the PCs are told to find them and negotiate.

The characters must travel through the Astral Plane to reach their destination. Refer to the random encounter charts for minor events during the journey.

When the characters approach the tonals' plane in the Astral Plane, they see it as a small silvery ball, only a foot across, of pinkish-silver color. Having previously obtained permission to enter from the Hierarch of Energy, they can cross the planar boundary by the usual means, either by a simple 50 PP expenditure or by using magic (*gate, plane travel, etc.*).

The Ladder Trap

The characters arrive on one rung of a gigantic black ladder. The rung and the two side poles are all about 2 feet in diameter, made of an unknown substance. The rung is 16 feet long. Another rung crosses the ladder about 120 feet above the characters. Looking around, the PCs can see two other ladders, one directly before and one behind them, each about 200 feet away. However, these are quadruple ladders, each having a total of five vertical poles with intermittent rungs crossing all the poles at the same points. The characters may deduce that they are within one part of such a ladder themselves, as indeed they are.

The whole area is softly lit and misty. The visibility is about 300 feet at most, and the PCs cannot see anything but the two other ladders and the immediate vicinity of their own. No life forms are visible, and no sound can be heard.

The party simply cannot leave this segment of the ladder. Any attempt to move away from it fails, as if no dimension exists in those directions. Only movement upward, toward the next higher rung, is physically possible. The PCs cannot climb or fly around the side poles, nor can they pass the upper or lower rungs, as they should soon discover.

The ladder cannot be damaged by any means, even a *wish*, and nothing can enable them (at this point) to leave the ladder. If the PCs leave the plane and return, they find themselves in an identical situation.

A Helpful Note

As they puzzle over their predicament, the

PCs suddenly realize that the lower rung is turning color and bulging. It becomes a brown semicircular arc, and moves upward, pushing them along its upper surface. The bulge becomes hemispherical, protruding evenly out from each side of the ladder (in the very space the PCs cannot enter). It nearly fills the width of the ladder, leaving only a few inches between each of its sides and the poles.

If the PCs attack or try to communicate with the brown curved surface, it stops. (It is a tonal and has 25% A-M, AC 0, 90 hp, and has the usual six ability scores ranging from 15-18.) It otherwise continues upward until one or more PCs are trapped between it and the upper rung. This prevents it from passing further, and it stops at that point, though only after pressing hard enough to inflict 4-40 points of damage to each victim (save vs. Physical Blow for half damage).

The movement from lower to upper rung takes only one second. If any characters are already in gaseous or miniature form, they can escape around the sides of the creature, but are otherwise trapped. If the characters evade the brown globe, it stops by itself before passing through the upper rung. The lower rung is undamaged by the incident, and all previous restrictions still apply.

When it stops moving, the brown surface starts changing color, shifting irregularly between a dark brown and light tan, at great speed. It continues indefinitely. Colors are the language of the tonals.

If any PC uses magical *read languages* or *speak with monsters*, the brown globe's intentions become clear. The latter effect is required if the character wants to respond. Alternately, once the brown globe is understood to be a creature, a *polymorph self* or *shapechange* can be employed, and an added *speak with monsters* effect allows the character to then communicate in the same manner, by changing colors.

The being has been asking, and continues to inquire, "Who are you? What are you? Why are you in my sea space?" This creature is a tonal of the smallest size, which the Immortals call a semiquaver. Her name is Seesquafore, and she does not like nicknames nor any shorter forms of address.

Semiquaver: SP Energy; RK Initiate; PP 250; A-M 25%; AC 0; HD 15 (hp 90); MV 1,920' (640'); AT 1 blast (25' range); D 2; THAC0 8; Int 17; AL L; XP 54,900 (5.5 PP)(Ref: I49)

Seesquafore can offer the following information. The beings of her race are Immortals. They live on these portays (the ladders), and

move freely about on them, though almost always in groups. She was traveling with three others, who were on adjacent portays. But she was broken loose by the encounter with the party, and is now quite upset, fearing that she might be relegated to the ranks of the ornaments (loose tonals having but temporary and minor status in relation to the rest) or, even worse, declared atonal and slated for extermination.

The tonals' main interests are in singing and parades. They travel the portays constantly, sometimes stopping for a while but often moving as quickly as they can, forming new combinations in new orders all the time. Some tonals believe that their purpose is to complete all the possible combinations in existence, a task that will take another 4-5 million years. All the tonals enjoy helping the Immortals, especially at the Olympic competitions. They compose a new song for each one, and sing it as praise for the winning contestants.

The following information is for the DM unless the PCs ask about the origin of Seesquafore's name. The names of tonals indicate their exact position and status. The lowest forms, the semiquavers (Initiate Immortals), all have "squa" in their names; the quavers (Novice Temporals), the shorter "qua." The crotchets (High Temporals) similarly have "cro," and the minims (3rd level Celestials), a "min." The noble semibreves, 3rd level Empyreals, bear a simple "sem," and the names of the great breves, 3rd level Eternals and rulers of all the rest, have a "bre." The prefix before each of these names indicates the tonal's note; for example, the PC's new friend is a C, within the range of A through G. Some tonals are also sharp or flat, but this is an obvious physical characteristic, not worth including in the name. Finally, since there are thousands of tonals, each name concludes with an assigned number. This part of the plane is populated only by lower numbers, from 1-1,000; the residents of other slum regions must bear long and unwieldy names, hoping for promotion and reassignment earned through service.

Seesquafore offers to guide the PCs to the more powerful tonals if, in exchange, they agree to help her rejoin her friends. She knows nothing of the essence of sound that the PCs seek, but can take them to tonals of Eternal status, who should surely know.

To further help the characters, Seesquafore offers to teach them a feeling that the tonals call "slurring." This is the nearly instinctive procedure by which they travel the portays, moving freely through the bars (the rungs currently imprisoning the characters within

this segment of the ladder). She does not agree to this unless the PCs first agree to help her. She then launches into a very vague and unhelpful description of a feeling of smooth transition and longness. The PCs cannot possibly understand her flickering until someone thinks of using *ESP*. She will not mind, as long as the characters explain the process beforehand. With that gentle mindlink for assistance, any PC can easily understand the nebulous feeling that she describes, and can use it at will by expending 1 PP per barr crossed.

If any PC asks how to pass beyond the portays, Seesquafore recoils in horror. To do that would be unlawful, and obvious proof of unworthiness. Besides, it's impossible.

With the aid of this gentle semiquaver, the party can escape this portion of the portay, and continue upward to seek their goal.

Resting

With Seesquafore bringing up the rear, the party heads upward. The slurring process works perfectly. If the party's movement rate is less than 640 feet per round, the semiquaver complains a bit about getting behind tempo, but does not insist on a faster speed.

When entering a section about 24 barrs up the portay, however, the party suddenly rams a cluster of web-like fibers that have filled the upper half of a section. Seesquafore blinks, "It's a rest!" as the group comes to a sudden stop. The elastic strands do not inflict damage, but do prevent further movement upward, despite any attempts to pass them.

The tonal becomes very sad. "This is it for me, I'm afraid," she explains in sad, soft colors. "There's a blockade here, and I cannot pass beyond it until I'm allowed." Another type of creature, which she simply calls a Blocker, only allows certain tonals to pass this point, and she obviously does not qualify. She cannot go to it to beg permission for she cannot leave this channel, her assigned space.

Unknown to all, the characters can pass across the vertical columns by the same slurring procedure that they use for passing across the barrs. It may take a while before it occurs to them to try, and you may need to drop a few hints in the form of the loud lament of Seesquafore. The tonal is quite surprised at the prospect, but she knows that the characters aren't tonals, so the idea isn't actually forbidden. She indicates the direction that the PCs should go—to their left across the vertical poles of the portay into an adjacent space.

The characters can find two more spaces to the left of their current position, but cannot

pass further. One more space lies to the right of that of their friendly tonal, and then that way is likewise impassable.

If they peer through the webs and examine the rungs that lie ahead (upward), the PCs find a small black object attached to the barr within the space immediately left of their original one. Although it appears inconsequential, this is a creature, the cause of their problems. It does not communicate, and is immune to all forms of attack. It likewise cannot attack the party.

The only way past the creature is to use *ESP* once again. The creature's alien, but simple, surface thoughts are composed of a single image—threesomes.

If the PCs discover this key and relay the information to Seesquafore, she brightens a bit. "Now I know how to get by, but there are no other tonals here. Do you have any ideas?"

If two of the PCs *polymorph* or *shape-change* into tonals, the problem solves itself. The webs suddenly clear, and the way upward lies open. The other PCs can pass at the same time, as the webs do not return until another unqualified tonal arrives.

Golden Silence

Continuing across the barrs of the portay, the characters notice that the surrounding mist is clearing, and that the space of the plane (still lit) is filled with thousands of similar portays, most of them occupied by dozens of tonals rushing upward, some in triplets. The ladders seem to be converging slightly, and a faint golden hue can be seen far above. "It's the coda; we're almost there!" flashes Seesquafore. She urges faster and faster speed, and the very poles to either side seem to vibrate with the intensity of the passage. And suddenly the group flies through a large, thick double barr at the end of a last section, and flies out into a huge spherical room.

"Finale at last!" blinks the tonal. "Maybe we can find my friends, and maybe someone to help you, too!" The room is over a mile across, and is filled with thousands of other similar creatures, floating about in groups. Most are of a size and color identical or similar to that of the party's new friend, though some are as much as 25 feet across and of blue or black hues. Many of them carry poles of some sort, with one, two, or even three black banners strung between them. Despite the room's size and population, it is utterly silent. And unlike the portays, no sense of gravity exists; everyone is free to move in any direction. However, the only exits are those leading to the next portays. No force can pen-

etrate the walls of the golden room without the direct permission of Thalia herself, Immortal creator of all the tonals.

If any PCs are in forms other than those of the tonals, no blatant intrusions occur, but they are watched closely. Oblivious to this, Seesquafore leads the PCs to one of the largest tonals, who is bright blue, and handles the introductions. She first asks about her former companions, but the new tonal, whose name is Deecronine, is suspicious. He announces that he will test her mind, to first be sure that she has not become atonal.

Crotchet tonal: SP Energy; RK Temporal 5; PP 1,000; A-M 50%; AC -4; HD 25 (hp 150); MV 480' (160'); AT 1 blast; D 8 (25' radius); Int 22; AL L; XP 398,000 (39.8 PP) (Ref: I 49)

Deecronine poses the following puzzle. "Do you remember the last harmony contest? Geecrotu's entry was two steps below Efquasix, who didn't have the second highest note in the chord. Aesquaten wasn't on the top nor the bottom. Beequait was just below me, and you know I've never been the top note when any of those guys were there. Do you remember, or can you figure out, who had the top note?"

The players must figure out the puzzle; poor Seesquafore can't remember. They cannot simply skip it, for Deecronine is perfectly serious, and will have the perplexed Seesquafore destroyed for atonality if she cannot produce the correct answer. The PCs can give the solution to their friend by any of several means, including a *wish*, but she insists that she must solve the puzzle alone (which she does eventually if the PCs do not). The correct answer is Efquasix, who led the chord; the next notes, in order, were Aesquaten, Geecrotu, Deecronine, and finally Beequait with the lowest note.

When she replies correctly, Deecronine reveals the portay that her friends took, on the other side of the room, and also mentions that at least two minims went that way as well. Seesquafore becomes excited, explaining that those beings are even more powerful than Deecronine, who is a crotchet (the tonal equivalent of a 5th level Temporal). The minims, who are of Celestial status, should be able to help the party.

Several decorations in the great room are worthy of special mention. Suspended here and there throughout the room, apparently designed for the amusement or interest of the tonals, are large floating transparent spheres containing various objects and materials. Several specimens of other-planar life forms

Part 3: The Sound of Music

(dead, but carefully preserved) are on display, as are several samples of all four elements. The non-magical air, water, and earth contained in them may be quite valuable to certain Immortals, for reasons of Bias. Since the passage across the barrs requires the expenditure of 1 PP per crossing, Immortals of Spheres other than Energy may be somewhat depleted at this point. Furthermore, the travels to come may pose a significant threat. Immortals of Thought have the greatest need, as their regeneration rate on this plane is a lowly 1 point per 24 hours.

None of the tonals object if the PCs take one of the display globes, certainly not one that appears nearly empty (air). The globes are made of a substance similar to clear, strong plastic, not as fragile as glass but not very resistant to damage (AC 4, hp 30). If a PC Immortal of Thought uses *teleport* or *dimension door* to enter an air-filled globe, he or she can then push it along by standard Immortal movement, which, because of the laws of local Bias, changes the regeneration rate to maximum (1 PP per round, as for Immortals of Energy). PC Immortals of Time can do likewise with water-filled balls, but the problem is more severe for Immortals of Matter, as they cannot enter the earth-filled balls so easily, and cannot see where they are going once immersed, unless the material is made invisible.

When everyone is ready, the group heads for the next portay to follow Seesquafore's friends and find the higher level tonals.

Second Movement

Entering the next portay, the group races along as before, passing through another 192 barrs at any rate of speed they choose. Since the crossing of each barr requires the temporary expenditure of 1 PP (for PCs, not for tonals), the party may wish to stop and rest of their own accord at occasional intervals. If none of the PCs are immersed in non-magical elemental material, their PP totals may be quite drained by the trip.

In this portay, the party must cope with four rests, each similar to the previous encounter. The featureless black creature on a barr has a clue readable by ESP. The rests present the following challenges.

The first rest, at the 32nd barr, is thinking about jagged lines. Seesquafore calls this a trill, but she is unable to produce such a sound unassisted. If the PCs shake her, toss her about, or otherwise vibrate her without harm (first obtaining her permission, of course) while she emits a steady tone—the first the PCs have heard from her—her mon-

otone changes to a wobbling sound, which clears the first blockade.

The second rest, at the 80th barr, is thinking steady, regular beeps. Seesquafore cannot stop her song so abruptly; she must start it softly, add volume, and then taper off. If any character takes the form of a small ball (such as a beholder, gas spore, or sporacle) and touches the tonal, her starting and ending tones are inaudible, and she emits only a short beep, which clears the barrier. If this solution does not occur to the players, the tonal may think back to a trip long ago in which several small balls suddenly appeared to her and her friends and, upon touching them, produced the same effect.

The third rest, at the 126th barr, is thinking about harmony. If two or more PCs sing harmonic notes in concert with Seesquafore's tone, the group can pass. However, this is impossible as long as the PCs remain in the same space as the tonal, for they quickly discover that the only note that they can sing in this space is identical to Seesquafore's; somehow, no other tone can be created, whatever the method tried. If the PCs move to other spaces, however, other notes are dictated, and the harmony can be achieved. Once the webs are cleared by the harmonic tones, the group can pass at will; the webs do not return when the harmony stops.

The fourth rest comes near the end of the trip, at the 180th barr. The portays are again converging toward another golden sphere. This final rest is thinking about oval shapes, and Seesquafore is alarmed by the news. "He's modulating," she blinks, "and I must become flat. But I am so perfectly round." The characters must damage the poor tonal, allowing some of her life-essence to escape. Any sharp object will do, such as one of the dagger artifacts. Seesquafore is alarmed, but her current trust in the PCs is great enough that she can be persuaded to give it a try. A mere 5 points of damage deflates the tonal enough to allow her to flatten herself slightly, clearing the web barrier. However, if she is immediately cured before passing through, her size returns to normal, and the webs return. The tonal must remain slightly flattened to pass through (but can be cured afterwards, if desired). Remember that the tonal's 25% A-M may interfere with magical curing.

Another 12 barrs later, the party bursts into another golden globe room.

Second Interlude

This room is the same size and shape as the previous one and contains the same types of displays. PCs again have an opportunity to

take displays of non-magical elemental material, if desired.

The population of the room is more varied than the last. Many semiquavers, quavers, and crotchets again crowd the place, but there are a few minims and even a semibreve, the latter two distinguished by their much lighter colors. They range from red and pink to deep yellow, in contrast to the blue, brown, and black hues of the lesser tonals. They are also slightly larger, the minims 28 feet across, and the semibreves, 33 feet.

The greater tonals cannot be approached yet. Seesquafore mentions that they must first find a crotchet, and be properly introduced. This business goes smoothly enough, and the party is soon facing a large bright red minim, Beeminate.

Minim tonal: SP Energy; RK Celestial 3; PP 2,000; A-M 60%; AC -6; HD 28 (hp 220), MV 240'(80'); AT 1 blast; D 16 (28' radius); Int 40; AL L; XP 917,500 (91.8 PP) (Ref: 149)

The minim is pompous and stretches his colors noticeably. He officially welcomes the characters to the tonals' world, and rambles on at length in courteous but formal hues, flashing somewhat slowly to be sure that the PCs understand him fully. He doesn't really say much of anything, but does so elaborately and at length.

Apparently satisfied that all formalities are complete, the minim turns his attention to Seesquafore's problem of finding her friends. As was Deecronine in the previous room, he is concerned about the possibility that she has become mentally unstable and potentially atonal. And as before, he poses a puzzle to be solved. The characters must again help out their friend, but cannot be openly caught at doing so since they want it to appear that Seesquafore is, in fact, stable. Otherwise, she will be destroyed.

Beeminate says, "Long ago, I took part in a slow melody 60 measures long that took 2 full turns to pass a barr. Our patron Immortal Thalia herself inspected us, and she started at the front, sped all the way to the rear (my humble self) and then back to the front again. She alone moves outside of the portays, you see. This inspection took 21 minutes. How fast (in measures per hour) did she actually move?"

The answer can be calculated as follows. The melody is moving at 60 measures per 2 turns, or 180 measures per hour. If Thalia's speed is S, she went from front to back at S-180 measures per hour (as the procession moved in the same direction), and returned

at S + 180 measures per hour (now moving in the opposite direction). Her total time (1/3 hour) equals the time one way (60 measures divided by S-180 measures per hour) plus the other (60 divided by S + 180). Her speed is exactly 420 measures per hour.

Successful Intelligence checks by any PC can reveal three clues to solving the puzzle—first, find the melody's speed; second, Thalia's travel time should be broken down into the two separate trips; and third, that time equals distance divided by speed, and that should be applied to each trip.

If any PC tries to solve the problem without considering the speed of the melody, Seesquafore objects, pointing out the complications introduced by that movement. She thinks of that solution first, and then recognizes its error, and thus will not use such an answer even if given it magically. She can eventually figure out the puzzle if the PCs cannot.

When she replies correctly, Beeminate allows her to go. He adds that her friends, now forming a triplet, were selected by one of the great breves to partake in a final melodic passage. Beeminate indicates the correct portay, and the party can be off once again, very near to their goal.

Third Movement

Most of this part of the journey can be entirely assumed. The party must pass 180 bars and two rests, but the rests merely duplicate previous barriers.

Upon passing the 180th barr, the party sees the shape of a tonal just ahead, across the barr. Seesquafore helps slow everyone down to avoid a collision, and the party crosses the next barr with care, coming upon the tail end of a procession. The tonal blocking their way is a friendly minim named Seeminine who will explain the situation.

No fewer than four of the great ruling breves are in the melody, one leading the way, so the movement rate is only 60 measures per hour. Upon entering the next hall, the breves are quite busy with the concluding ceremony. They also have a major problem; word has it that one of the crotchets in the melody is an impostor, actually atonal, and probably plans to ruin the proceedings. In any event, the breves are certainly too busy to talk with the PCs or the semiquaver. Although they do chat with others during the slow melody, the party cannot possibly reach them; they are all dozens of measures ahead, and hundreds of tonals block the way.

Just then, a cluster of tiny tonals arrives from behind the party, scooting around them

and through the barr ahead! Both Seeminine and Seesquafore recognize these young ones, mere graces, who are not bound by the constraints of their elders. They add to the melody, in their own immature way. In the desperation of the moment, Seesquafore softly blinks "Gee, would that I were a grace..."

The party should take the hint. If not, she natters on aimlessly for a bit, and then asks hesitantly whether the PCs can make her a grace, temporarily, so that she can proceed onward to get the attention of a breve.

Neither the PCs nor the tonals can skip ahead in any form except that of a young grace. The PCs can accomplish this via magic, but their semiquaver friend is quite upset at the prospect of being stranded here alone, a straggler behind the melody proper. She wants to come along, and consents to being *polymorphed* into a grace herself. She even lowers her A-M to maintain the effect, a terrible violation of her privacy but apparently necessary at the moment.

Assuming grace form, the party can move ahead once again. They can freely move across as well, and Seesquafore is exhilarated by the experience. She has never done such a thing (and never plans to do so again), and thus wants to take full advantage of the experience.

The party dodges in and out through dozens of tonals of all colors and sizes, semiquavers to semibreves, some flat, some sharp. They skip around a few rests and finally come upon a great breve 24 measures ahead, the sole occupant of two whole measures. The breve commands them to stop.

"Rogues! You do not belong here. Get back to your place!"

Breve tonal: SP Energy; RK Eternal 3; PP 8,000; A-M 80%; AC -10; HD 38 (hp 540); MV 60' (20'); AT 1 blast; D 64 (38' radius); Int 84; AL L; XP 5,550,000 (555 PP) (Ref: I49)

Seesquafore is so startled by the admonition, and so humbled in the august presence of the ruler, that her A-M returns, and dispels the *polymorph*. At the sight of the abrupt transformation, the breve pales slightly, and flashes again. "Do you have any last words, foolish one?"

Seesquafore can only stammer out, in fading hues, "Oh great Eabretu, forgive me! I was befriended by these others, who brought me here!" Turning to the PCs, the breve demands an explanation.

This encounter takes place while the breve continues lumbering along. A few barrs are

be crossed while the events occur.

The breve is a 3rd level Eternal, one of the highest rulers of the entire plane. As the PCs explain the full situation (including their names and Immortal status, their quest, their goal, and the events that occurred since entering the plane of the tonals), the breve calms down. He presses for details whenever the characters offer incomplete information. Finally understanding the problems involved, he thinks a bit, and then pronounces a ruling.

"Seesquafore, you helpful, but naive little thing, have your new friends change you again, and go forward 9 measures. Your former compatriots are there, filling in as a triplet. I was going to promote an ornament to round them out properly, but there was not time. A foursome will be even more appropriate for their phrase."

Seesquafore thanks the great one, and begs the PCs to help her one last time. After a fond good-bye, brief only because of the impatient attitude of the mighty breve, she scampers off.

The breve now turns to the PCs. "As for your problem, the essence of sound can be rather easily obtained in this plane, but you must aid us first.

"As you have heard, we have a problem. A rogue atonal crotchet has infiltrated the melody, but is masquerading as a normal tonal. I can't imagine how it happened, but it has; we have it on the highest authority.

"I and my fellow nobles will interrogate the suspects once we reach the great hall, before the ceremonies begin. You are obviously talented and responsible beings, and quite bluntly, we have little power over the atonals. At best we can silence and imprison them, but they are immune to our main forms of attack. Our otherwise deadly sound-blasts do not affect those of our own race, and these renegades are embarrassingly closely related to us. For the atonals are merely our chaotic opposites, as it were, rejecting the peace and order brought by Saint Guidarezzo so long ago, and remaining forever wild and cacophonous.

"Thus, I ask you to stand by while we try to find the rogue, assisting us as needed and possibly handling a bit of rough stuff. Are you willing? In exchange, we will give you the essence of sound."

As the party is no doubt quite willing, they have nothing more to do than move along with the breve until the finale is reached, 80 or 90 bars later. The breve chats cordially, sticking to topics such as tonal society and questions about the PCs.

Under the Mesmerizer

In a 100-foot diameter private room adjacent to the great golden chamber, four crotchets float around a pulsating central globe. The swirling colors in the orb throb compellingly, but the PCs can resist its effects. "Don't go too close," warns Eabretu, the great breve. "This is a mesmerizer.

"We have narrowed down our choice to one of these four beings. The room is sealed, and will not be opened until I command it.

"We caught these four conducting secret and unauthorized communication. The renegade is definitely one of them. However, he has obviously had a chance to influence the others to some extent.

"This one is Deecronine, with whom you spoke some time earlier. To his right is Beecrofore, and then Geecroait; finally, to Deecronine's left, is Seecroten.

"Now, a good tonal always tells the truth. The chaotic atonal will always lie, even under the mesmerizer. But if the rogue has tried to convert the others, they may be confused, and will alternate lies and truths, starting with either.

"The mesmerizer holds them fast, but only up to three short questions can be asked. Their wills are too drained to respond further.

"I have decided upon the questions. Let us hear their responses, and see if we can deduce the culprit's identity.

"Tonals, hear me! Describe the brother to your left."

Beecrofore, Deecronine, and Geecroait all blink "He's the atonal!" Seecroten, however, blinks "He's normal."

The breve continues, "Now describe the brother across from you."

Geecroait and Seecroten flash, "He's confused." Beecrofore and Deecronine flash "He's normal."

"Now describe the brother on your right," concludes Eabretu.

All four blink the same response— "He's confused."

"Well, my newfound friends," flashes the breve, "what do you think? Who is telling the truth, who is lying, and who is just confused?"

Encourage the players to discuss this puzzle in logic. If they cannot deduce a firm solution, the breve figures out the problem, and names the renegade.

Solution

It may help to diagram the answers of the tonals, as follows. The four are indicated by the letters B, D, G, and S; their answers by N

(normal), C (confused), or A (atonal).

	B	D	G	S
B	—	A	C	N
D	C	—	N	A
G	A	C	—	C
S	C	C	N	—

The answer is simple, if you start in the right place. B says that S is normal. If S is normal, then G is also normal. But B says that G is confused. Thus, B's second statement is not true, so B is either the atonal or is confused. If B is merely confused, S is normal and D is the atonal. But D says that S is normal. Thus, B is the atonal!

If the players want to work out the rest, it follows that G is not confused, nor is he an atonal, since he is truthful about B. Thus, G is normal, and tells the truth completely. D and S were merely confused.

Continuing

Eabretu allows the innocent tonals to be taken from the room, giving instructions that poor Deecronine and Seecroten be treated to remove their confusion.

"Now," he says triumphantly, "let's see what this rogue has to say." And he turns off the mesmerizer as the PCs stand by, ready for action.

The blue atonal's colors stabilize as he composes himself. Then, apparently realizing that he has been discovered, he moves quickly away from the party, flashing "You'll never take me alive!"

As previously noted, this battleground is a perfectly spherical room, its exits sealed and impassable by any means. The central mesmerizer globe, 10 feet in diameter, floats freely, and can be easily moved about.

Atonal crotchet: SP Energy; RK Temporal 5; PP 1,000; AC -4; HD 25 (hp 150); MV 480' (160"); AT 1 blast; D 16 (25' radius); Int 25; AL C; XP 398,000 (39.8 PP)

All of the atonal's ability scores are 25. Its physical attack form is a blast of sound inflicting 16 points of damage to all within it (save vs. Physical Blow for half damage). Its blast normally causes half that, but is amplified by its rage and by the restricted space. It can use all forms of Power combat, but can only produce magical effects that are based on sound (blasting, silence, etc.). The atonal is immune to ability score attacks, and cannot employ them. Unarmed combat cannot inflict damage to it. Magical *silence* blocks its blast, but cannot adhere to it; it can always

move out of the area (and A-M applies as well).

The desperate Beecrofore attacks and fights to the death, facing imprisonment (a far worse fate) at the hands of its lawful cousins. The battle should not be too difficult for well-played characters. The breve does not reactivate the mesmerizer, as it could catch the PCs easily. He merely avoids the fray, trusting the characters to emerge victorious. If the battle moves too close to him, Eabretu may produce his own blast, which inflicts 64 points of damage in a 38-foot radius. In play, he does not do so if any PC within range has 70 hp or less at the time, but may otherwise blast away. He only blasts once, accidentally in his excitement.

The atonal's form collapses when it reaches zero hit points, leaving only a flimsy outer skin floating in the room. At that point, the breve flashes brightly "Stop the battle! That is your goal!" Given the chance to explain, he comments "The skin now contains the essence of sound. Do what you will to it; it is otherwise of little use." If any dagger artifact is touched to the remains of the atonal, it indeed absorbs the essence sought by the PCs, and glows brightly.

Conclusion

The PCs are cordially invited to stay for the ceremonies scheduled to conclude the previous musical movements. All the participating tonals are present, and a stirring hymn of victory is sung in the characters' honor, as the great breve explains the details of their courage (and, if applicable, of their brilliant logic).

The characters are told to return any time they like (first acquiring the permission of the Hierarch of Energy), and the tonals bid them a fond farewell. The party may *plane travel* back into the Astral Plane, and return victoriously with this part of their greater goal.

The characters are given exact directions to the Home (Outer) Plane of the notions, creatures of pure thought. This is a bit odd to the Hierarchs, since the sense of taste falls within the province of the Sphere of Time (which governs water); however, the clue from the riddle indicates that they must get taste from a notion.

Check normally for random encounters in the Astral Plane. The plane of notions is distinctive and has many connections to the Astral Plane, thus appearing as a very large sphere. Magical examination reveals nothing but air; the entire plane is filled with it.

The bias of the plane is friendly toward Immortals of Thought, neutral toward Matter and Time, and hostile toward Energy and Entropy.

This portion of the greater adventure involves little or no combat, but may entail much role playing in a free-wheeling, chaotic setting. Once the proper notion is found and contacted, the exact location of the goal is revealed and easily acquired. In the process of getting there, however, many strange things may occur.

Principal Characters

Notions (1-8): SP Thought; RK Initiate; PP 250; A-M 40%; AC -12; HD 5 to 50; MV 72 miles (24 miles); AT 2 swoops; D special; ML 9

HD	XPV	PPV	THAC 0/10	Check Modifier
5	5,125	0.5	15/21	+55
10	29,500	2.9	10/20	+45
15	47,550	4.7	8/18	+30
20	70,175	7.0	5/15	+25
25	105,500	10.5	2/13	+20
30	144,250	14.4	2/10	+15
35	183,000	18.3	2/8	+10
40	221,750	22.1	-1/5	+5
45	260,500	26.0	-3/3	+5
50	299,250	29.9	-6/2	0

The physical form of a notion is a lacy network of strands of air. A notion is immune to all magical effects except those which affect air or thought. It has no ability scores except Intelligence which is 1 point per Hit Die. It can use Power to probe and shield, but not to attack or create magical effects. If subjected to direct Intelligence attacks, a notion is insulted and flees immediately.

In an air-filled environment (such as their Home Plane), notions cannot be detected by any magical means. Only a Power probe can detect it, and the chance is only 2 in 6 per

probe. Once a notion is found in this way, the individual probing may automatically "track" the notion by renewing the probe each round. However, if the notion uses power to shield, it is undetectable unless the probe is enhanced with a *wish*.

A notion attacks by swooping at a target. If it hits an Immortal, the victim must make an Intelligence check, modified by the size of the notion (as given in the last column in the chart above). If the check is failed, the character is affected by the notion's flavor (idea). In the game, tell the player of the affected character what the effect is, and its relative strength. The player makes a saving throw vs. Magic Spell each round thereafter until successful. A successful roll indicates that the notion's attack has worn off.

A mortal hit by a notion may save vs. Spell to avoid the effect, but only a result of 20 (unmodified) indicates success, regardless of level or Hit Dice. If affected, the victim may attempt to save vs. Spells once per hour. A successful indicates that the effect has abated to a manageable level. The effect does not pass entirely for 1 hour per Hit Die of the attacking notion.

Whenever a notion successfully affects an Immortal, it is cured of 1-6 PP. If undamaged, it is not noticeably changed, except to be pleased that it has succeeded.

Encounter Key

1. Arrival

When the party enters the plane, they see a vast expanse of softly lit nothingness. Occasional clouds are the only features. The air is mostly still, but slight breezes ruffle their hair.

The party is immediately spotted by a few medium-sized notions. The number of notions is equal to the number of characters (counting Drek). Each notion is a different flavor, but they are all 20 Hit Dice—not overwhelming, but not to be ignored, either. They confer briefly; each expends 5 PP to erect a shield, and they joyously zoom in to have some fun.

Select or randomly determine one notion for each character in the party, using any of the following flavors: impatience, unconcern, certainty, sorrow, obedience, rebellion, dislike, forgetfulness, certainty, and fondness. Ignore any that you do not use.

Whenever anyone in the party seems to resist or shake off the first effect, a different notion swoops in to try its luck. This process continues until each character has been affected by two different notions. When any

character shakes off a second effect, all the notions drop their shields (having expended 5 PP per round to keep them up, but regenerating 1 PP per round and regaining 1-6 PP per successful effect). This first successful character is then telepathically contacted by one of the notions, saying, "Whee! Isn't this FUN?"

The notions' attacks cease when all the characters have been subjected to two different effects. The creatures hover nearby, nearly motionless (and detectable only by probe), but are now friendly and peaceful. However, some PCs may still be suffering effects.

The character contacted initially may converse with the notion without expense. If any other character has located a notion, that character may also converse, but must first use Power to enable *telepathy*.

These notions know nothing of an essence. They do mention that the notion of taste is around somewhere, but they have no specific idea as to where. If asked, they agree to serve as guides so the party can find another notion who might know. Once that is agreed, all the notions take off at normal speed—72 miles per turn, about 6,336 feet per round—and are never encountered again. By the time they realize that the PCs are not accompanying them, they are far away. They decide that the party didn't want guides after all.

The characters may do whatever they like. If they use *wishes* or other means to detect their goal, they get a specific direction to travel, but no accurate location. They may *teleport* as desired, but all the scenery looks the same. One turn after the first group of notions departs, the party sees a multi-colored cloud approaching. It is about 10 feet in diameter, but is not whirling nor making any obviously hostile moves.

2. Progress

The colorful cloud is a djinni, whose name is Al-Sarab. He is accompanied by, and under the effects of, two broad notions. Each has 40 Hit Dice. One is absurdity, the other is misinterpretation.

Djinni: AC 5; HD 7+1 (hp 45); MV 240'(80'); AT 1 fist or 1 whirlwind; D 2-16 or 2-12; ML 9; Int 14; AL C; XPV 1,025

The seven powers of the djinni, each usable three times per day, are *create food and drink*, *create metallic objects*, *create soft goods and wooden objects*, *become invisible*, *assume gaseous form*, *form a whirlwind*, and

Part 4: An Odd Notion

create illusions. The creation of a whirlwind takes 5 rounds; the result is 70 feet long. If slain, the djinni's spirit returns to the elemental plane of air.

The djinni coalesces into humanoid form and introduces himself to the party, giggling a bit after he does so. Poor Al-Sarab is very difficult to deal with. He is prone to lapse into irrelevant and outrageous statements, and misunderstands nearly everything the characters try to say. To complicate matters, the two notions move in at the same time, each picking one player character as a victim and settling in quietly. Each victim must make the usual Intelligence check (modified as difficult), but must check each round unless they move around to evade. Once affected, a victim has a -4 penalty to the saving throw as long as the notion remains draped around him.

The notions do not care to converse at this time. If found and contacted, they simply do not respond.

One wish allows the djinni a saving throw (his is 9) toward resisting one notion's effect; thus, two successes are needed to restore the djinni to normal. *Cureall* has no effect, but *mind barrier* can bestow a +8 bonus to the creature. Such magic does not affect Immortal saving throws against the notions' effects, however. When the djinni's mind is fully cleared, the notions stop their activities and depart, sulking a bit at the loss of their entertainment.

Al-Sarab can indeed help the party. He has met a huge notion of taste, and is more than willing to lead the party to it if he can find it, in exchange for their assistance.

3. Success

The djinni is willing to chat about anything the PCs desire as they all fly along through the nearly featureless plane. He knows that the plane contains literally millions of notions, and they are nearly impossible to avoid. They have their own unusual brand of humor, at the expense of most visitors. Al-Sarab was trapped in a bottle and brought to this plane by some mortal adventurers, who needed his services and freed him at one point. He is comfortable here, but misses his family and friends, who are back on his home plane.

The PCs should not reveal their Immortal status to this mortal creature. If they do so, he is utterly awed and struck by a religious fervor, thereafter treating the PCs with the utmost deference, using flowery language, and drifting off into praises and hallelujahs from time to time.

Al-Sarab takes the party straight to a large group of notions. He recognizes certain cloud formations as airmarks. Although the several hundred notions in this region are curious, none swoop the characters. They all simply wait.

The djinni says that the party must wait until they are contacted, as he knows no means of initiating conversation. He offers to attract their attention by means of a whirlwind, but also notes that such might encourage them to frolic, at the party's expense. If a fracas does occur, select as many different notion flavors as you like, and apply them diligently.

The notions wait either 30 hours or until the PCs take the initiative and find them (via probe) and start the conversation. Within two minutes of the contact, the notions who have been contacted say that they have called the notion of taste that the party seeks, and that she will be here in a few minutes.

The notion of taste is very broad, being one of the largest known notions on the plane. Because it is 50 Hit Dice, it could envelop the whole party. As it approaches, however, it initiates contact with a PC Immortal of Thought.

If the character displays an appropriate amount of respect for the huge creature, it quickly agrees to give the party what they seek. If the character is less than deferential, a few dozen moderate-sized notions of deference, obsequiousness, and respect come swooping by, attacking until the characters behave properly. In any event, the notion of taste eventually wraps itself around the dagger artifact, and the device glows with the usual indication of success.

The notion offers to give the characters a sample of its flavor, if they wish. It is not insistent, but merely presents the opportunity. Any character giving his or her consent is allowed no Intelligence check, having forfeited such resistance by agreeing. The notion of taste is not that of a physical sensation, normally associated with foods and other substances; it is instead an appreciation of quality and harmony in concepts—"good taste," rather than "taste good or bad." It is this nebulous quality that the party has sought, much more subtle than the PCs may have thought. And unfortunately, the notion does not stay with them. Even if they try to keep the effect of the huge notion, voluntarily forfeiting the round-by-round saving throws, the effect wears off within 24 hours.

4. Departure

If the PCs have offered to take the djinni back to his Home Plane, they depart at this time. The creature is unable to go plane traveling as freely as do the characters, and requires some magical assistance and/or an escort. Check normally for encounters in the Astral and Ethereal Planes.

If the party has not made such an offer, Al-Sarab makes an unusual request before the party leaves this plane.

"Take my life. Please!" pleads the djinni.

When the characters ask for reasons, the creature eagerly explains. It has no way of returning to its home plane, except for one—its life force will automatically return if it is slain. Al-Sarab mentions that this is rumored to be an ability of the gods, but that his race has also been blessed with the ability.

The characters may grant his request (though the process is rather gruesome, and everyone but Drekk should feel sorry about it later), or may counter with an offer to take him home. Either way, the djinni will get back where he belongs, and the party returns to the Hierarchs with their own objective, the essence of taste.

Part 5: Master of the Earth

The party must now obtain the essence of touch from the Earthlord, the Elemaster of Earth. The location of his home, the Plane of Earth, is well-known. The Elemaster himself has a home planet which is unique in the multiverse. It is identified by its brilliant white surface, perfectly smooth and unbroken by terrain, creatures, or other features. Its appropriate nickname is Cueball.

The characters must pass through the Ethereal Plane, and possibly the Astral, to reach their objective. Check for random encounters during the journey through each plane.

The bias of the Elemental Plane is friendly toward Immortals of Earth, neutral toward those of Fire and Water, and hostile toward those of Air and Entropy.

In an airless environment, such as exists in several areas of this adventure, verbal communication is possible for Immortals but is totally directional. A PC's words go in a straight line (similar to the path of a lightning bolt), and cannot be heard by anyone not on that line. Characters may use Aura to communicate either in an area or directionally.

The Planet

The Earthlord dwells in the center of the planet Cueball. The planet is unique in several ways, but one of the strangest is the pattern of its six moons. All are made of the same dense white rock found throughout the planet. Five of them trace intersecting orbits about 100,000 miles above the planet's barren flat surface. The Elemaster himself controls these orbits so that no collisions occur, altering the velocities of the moons very slightly at occasional intervals. Untended, the system would collide and explode within 2-20 months.

The sixth moon of Cueball is made of exceptionally dense material and moves at much higher speed. Its orbital path is actually below the planet's surface. This moon, called Snowball, circles the planet once every 8 hours. It has 100% Anti-Magic. Though it remains within the tunnel, slight irregularities in its path cause it to bump the sides of the tunnel occasionally, producing slight rumbling vibrations. Because of these contacts, the hasty little moon spins rapidly as it proceeds.

The surface of Cueball is only 100 feet above the top of Snowball's orbit corridor, and can be reached by magical means. No tunnel connections exist. The planet's entire surface is smooth, polished, and unmarked.

Cueball's circumference is 31,000 miles, and its center is about 4,925 miles below the

surface. The planet is perfectly spherical, and rotates very slowly. It has no sun; in fact, there are very few stars in the entire plane of existence.

Because of its size and density, the planet's gravity is about double that of the homeworld of mortal humans, a force of 64 feet per second squared on or near the planet's surface. This causes the movement rate for walking and running to be half normal in that area. The gravity lessens as the core of the planet is approached, reaching zero at the exact center. Flying movement rates are not affected.

The material of the planet and its moons is 100% resistant to magic designed to affect earth or rock (such as *pass-wall* and *dissolve*), including wishes with such purposes. Other magical effects function normally, except those which use fire; all such effects are reduced to half normal, considering area of effect, damage, and range, by special decree of the Elemaster. Magical travel inward toward the center of the planet functions only to the first barrier.

With the sole exception of Snowball's orbit corridor, the planet is solid to 1 mile deep. The region from there to 2,000 miles deep is called the Uppers, characterized by erratic tunnels of various sizes which are populated by assorted creatures. Some of them dig new corridors, but most cannot, and merely wander. The corridors lead to thousands of small lair burrows, large caverns, and other habitable nodes.

A barrier shell of extremely high density at the bottom of the Uppers encases the central volume of the planet. Attempts at magical travel inward from the surface region or the Uppers are automatically stopped here. The PCs cannot pass the barrier by any means, normal or magical, except through one of six gates. A large flat area lies before each gate, and any creature *teleporting* inward through the Uppers arrives at one of these flat areas, regardless of the intended destination. The six gates and their respective *teleport* fields are color-coded for ease of orientation.

Each gate is a living creature called a baak. The baak appears as a colored circle on the black barrier, about 50 feet across. It is able to dilate itself, opening a hole of half that size. It allows any creature to pass, but only after the visitor truthfully reveals his or her name, home plane, home country and city (if applicable), profession or Sphere, level or Hit Dice, alignment, abilities, equipment carried, and companions. The baak records the information for later use if needed, and also relays it to the Elemaster instantly.

The volume beyond the gate is known as the Lowers. This region is the only part of the

planet that contains air-filled spaces. It is otherwise very similar to the Uppers except that the tunnels are horizontal, curving slightly to parallel the planet's surface far above (as does Snowball's orbit corridor). Vertical tubes at regular intervals lead to progressively lower levels of corridors, each about 500 feet apart. The Lowers reach to a depth of 4,000 miles, where there is another barrier identical to the previous one, again with six baaka serving as color-coded gates.

The baaka who guard this lower barrier permit no entry except by explicit permission from the Elemaster. When confronted by a visitor, the baaka asks for all the information given at the other gate, checks it for correlation, inquires about any discrepancies (such as casualties of traveling companions), contacts the Earthlord telepathically, and summarizes the situation. The baak does not allow passage unless the Elemaster replies, giving his permission.

The core of the planet encased by the lower barrier is called the Citadel. It is the private residence of the Elemaster, and is normally occupied by him and two to eight Temporals of the Sphere of Matter (his aides), plus assorted powerful mortal creatures privileged to serve the Earthlord. No interdimensional (*teleport*, *dimension door*, etc.) or interplanar travel is possible in the Citadel. The corridors are utterly symmetrical, with levels every 100 feet leading to thousands of beautifully sculpted chambers containing exquisite treasures from everywhere in the multiverse. The Elemaster usually lives here in 2-5 avatars plus a primary form, so that he can travel to many places at once and maintain his duties as the Master of Earth.

To preserve the security of his home planet, the Earthlord has made several major changes in the reality of Cueball itself. The primary defense prevents any knowledge of the interior or workings of Cueball to be magically detected. Even multiple *wishes* reveal nothing about the planet's interior. Any visitors to the interior automatically and irrevocably forget all details as they leave. They remember only certain portions of what they did and where they went, and gaps are obvious. Only permission from the Earthlord can restore those memories, or give any clue about them. Although the Hierarchy of Matter technically commands the Earthlord, even the Hierarchy allows the Elemaster to maintain this power for privacy.

Thus, not even the Council of Hierarchs can offer any clues about the Earthmaster's home planet, except for its outer appearance. They simply forgot the details!

Part 5: Master of the Earth

Random Encounters

The party may encounter various creatures in the *Uppers and Lower*s of Cueball. Select or randomly determine the specific creatures using the following listing. In general, most creatures are friendly to any visitor, and strife among residents is virtually unheard of. This is, after all, the home planet of the master of the entire plane.

To determine encounters randomly, roll 1d20 to find the number of different types of creatures in a given area (peaceful coexistence is the norm). Then roll once again to find each type of creature. A final roll determines the number appearing per type. If two ranges are given, the first numbers refer to wandering creatures and the numbers in parentheses refer to creatures in a lair.

Those creatures marked with an asterisk (*) are found in the *Lower*s only, in an air-filled environment. Reroll such results if the encounter is within the *Uppers* or the *Citadel*. A reference is given for each creature so that detailed statistics may be easily found, but they should not be needed unless the PCs start a fight. *General notes* about some of the creatures are given after the charts.

Number of Types Appearing 1d20

1-6	1
7-14	2
15-18	3
19-20	4

Creatures Appearing

1d20	Creature Type	Number Appearing	Ref
1	Adaptors	1-12 (3-30)	M24
2	Basilisk	1-4 (2-12)	X46, C39
3	*Cockatrice	1-20 (2-40)	X46, C39
4	Earthdrake	1-4 (2-12)	M29
5-8	Elementals	1-6 (1-100)	C40
9	*Giant, stone	1-4 (2-12)	X50
10	Gorgon	3-18	C40
11-12	Horde being	1-10 bodies	C41
13	Human	1-4 (2-8)	—
14	Juggernaut	1	M43
15-16	Kryst	2-8 (10-100)	C42
17	Medusa	1-4 (2-12)	C42
18-19	Servant	1 (10-100)	—
20	Spider	4-9	M41

- Re-roll if the encounter occurs in an airless region of Cueball.

Creature Notes

Adaptors: These creatures appear as golems, but are *alive and highly intelligent* (for mortals). When mistaken for servants, they enjoy *startling* the victims by making silly faces in response to orders, or wordlessly *refusing to obey*.

Cockatrice (Lowers only): These appear as normal birds, only a foot long, and may seek handouts of food.

Earthdrake: The drakes appear identical to 6-foot-tall elementals, and may try to practice their pickpocketing abilities. If successful, they return the items and ask for suggestions on improving their skills.

Gorgon: These are herd animals, bred and milked like cows. Even if encountered alone, a cowherd (elemental, horde body, kryst, or other) within 300 feet is temporarily out of sight.

Horde creature: Up to 10,000 Hit Dice of insect-like bodies are inhabited by a *single life force*. This one creature is the peace monitor who watches all and reports any disturbances immediately.

Human: Some high-level adventurers are always present in Cueball, living with and studying the ways of the native creatures. They are lightly armed at best, and probably *unarmored*. If encountered in an airless environment, they are using magical spells or devices for survival.

Medusa: This is a plant-like being, a mass of 10-foot-long tentacles connected to a small spherical body. It may approach and wave its tentacles in an alarming manner, but is just begging for food.

Servant: Golem servants tend the needs of most of the living residents of Cueball, and are also used for heavy labor. Any type may be encountered—amber, bone, bronze, wood (X50), mud, or obsidian (C33).

Spider: The planar spiders are *industrious* merchants and may be found here within Cueball, seeking bargains as usual.

Encounter Key

1. Cueball

The characters may examine the Elemental Plane of Earth and select an appropriate point of entry, either deep space or upon (or within) a planet. If they search for Cueball, they can find it after a brief examination. However, if they choose to enter the plane within Cueball itself, they are automatically shunted to the *orbit corridor*, because of the Elemaster's security defenses.

If the PCs enter the plane near or upon Cueball, they observe the odd configuration of the moons and the unique planetary surface. No point of entry exists; the travel inward must be by transdimensional means, such as *dimension door* or *teleport*.

When they enter Cueball, the PCs arrive in a large tunnel, 30 feet in diameter and perfectly circular. It is unlit and airless, with smooth white stone walls polished to a high gloss. The tunnel is masterfully constructed, leading in a nearly straight line in either direction. It curves very slightly downward in the distance. No intersections are visible.

When upon or within Cueball, the PCs immediately notice that they feel much heavier. Their weight is about twice normal, and their walking and running movement rates drop by half. Flying movement is unaffected.

If the PCs use a *wish* or other means to find out which way to go to reach the Elemaster, the magic reveals nothing. This is highly unusual; even if he is on another plane of existence, some indication should be given.

As they decide how to proceed, the party may detect that something is approaching. This occurs only if one or more PCs is in contact with a surface of the tunnel (either standing or touching it). If all the PCs are floating in mid-air, no warning is given. Otherwise, a vibration is detected, very soft at first but increasing very quickly.

Snowball is coming.

2. Danger

As Immortal visitors enter the plane, they are shunted to a point in the orbit corridor about 2 minutes ahead of Snowball's current position. This small test from the Earthlord is just a reminder of his power, and not expected to cause problems except for carelessness types.

If the PCs detect Snowball's approach, they can also detect the direction. The perfect roundness of the corridor should also make them suspicious. If no player voices a guess, Drekk brings up the subject. If the vibration is detected in *advance*, Drekk becomes ethereal (at 50 PP cost) just in case something dangerous is approaching.

If Snowball approaches undetected, it cannot be avoided. Its speed is nearly 57,000 feet per round, or over one mile per second—so great that it arrives a split-second after it is sighted.

About 1 minute (6 rounds) after the PCs can detect the approach of the moon, Snowball passes. Its impact can inflict an incredibly large amount of damage, which instantly obliterates any creature or object in its path,

and its A-M removes all magical effects (even a *wall of force*, for example). But if the PCs have become ethereal, assumed gaseous form, shrunk themselves to one inch high or less, or have taken some other appropriate precaution, Snowball's passing does not affect them at all.

If one or more of the PC's material forms are destroyed by Snowball, the party may return to the Outer Planes so that the victims may construct new bodies. If so, they are placed in the same situation when they return, forced to deal with Snowball another time. If the players are untalented, their characters might be forced to give up and confess their failure to the Hierarchs. Some other team of Temporals are then sent for this essence.

3. Exploring the Uppers

Assuming that they evade Snowball, the party may wander around a bit, but should eventually head downward into the planet. Snowball comes around again in 8 hours.

If the party physically travels through the 2,000-mile-deep region called the Uppers, use creatures from the random encounter list as desired. You may improvise as you wish, but the creatures encountered should not be hostile, and may offer guidance.

4. First Gateway

As previously explained, the PCs cannot go deeper than 2,000 feet until they are each quizzed by a baak guardian at the barrier. Each PC must truthfully reveal his or her name (a common name will do, rather than a truename), home plane, Sphere, Hit Dice, alignment, abilities, equipment carried, and companions.

Baak (6, 1 per gate): SP Matter; RK Mortal; PP 5,000; A-M none (100% vs. mortals); AC -15; HD 100 (hp 750); MV 0; AT/D by magic or Power combat only; ML 12; AL L; XP 457,250 (45.7 PP)

The baak does not attack unless it is attacked first. It is immune to (and ignores) ability score attacks, any other attack that causes instant death (such as *disintegrate* or *death spell*), and all mental attacks (since it has no mind *per se*). It can use all forms of Power attacks. If severely damaged, it pauses to use *cureall* on itself, and resumes the battle. It stops attacking if its opponents surrender, but resumes if attacked again.

5. The Lowers

Once they pass the first baak, the party may *teleport* directly to the next barrier, or may physically pass through the 2,000-mile-deep section of the planet known as the Lowers. If they choose the latter, use the random encounter list as desired. As with the Uppers, you may use your imagination freely in describing the areas and designing creature lairs.

6. Second Gateway

When the PCs introduce themselves at this second and final barrier before entering the Citadel, the baak behaves oddly. Instead of being its usual stoic self, it does not give permission to enter, rather it commands the party to enter, and to do so quickly.

Should the party unwisely fight this creature, use the same statistics as for the baak in encounter 4 (first gateway).

7. Special Notes for the DM

A horde being, which is a life form that has one mind in 10,000 Hit Dice of insect-like bodies, achieved Immortality a few hundred years ago. Its name is N'grath. It worked hard and successfully, eventually reached Eternal status, and became one of the Elemaster's trusted aides. It was exceptionally useful in this capacity, because of its forms. Unfortunately, N'grath was also untrustworthy; shortly before the PCs' arrival, it rebelled against its master. It chose a time when all of the Earthlord's avatars were in the Citadel, and attacked suddenly and with total surprise.

Both the Elemaster and N'grath are severely depleted right now. Both are resting and regenerating for another round of battle. However, all of the Elemaster's material forms have been destroyed. N'grath has been reduced to a mere handful of forms. It has been expecting Immortal reinforcements to come to the Earthlord's aid, and is now under the protection of a carefully worded *wish*. If anyone else uses a *wish* to find out its identity, the result will be "the Earthlord."

8. Contacts

Just past the gate to the Citadel, a single 30-foot-wide corridor leads to the left and right, curving gently in the distance. As the party enters the corridor, one PC (of the Sphere of Matter, but otherwise randomly selected) is contacted by telepathy. The being making the contact is either N'grath, the horde creature, or the Elemaster. You may determine one at random.

The mind introduces itself as the Earthlord and asks that the group pause for a minute while it probes them. The being refuses to come out into the open, but mentions that there is great danger and encourages the PCs to stay on their guard. This is an additional security precaution, it explains, and the reasons for it will be explained shortly. Although no positive identification is possible, the mind does seem to be of great strength, even for an Immortal. If the characters agree to be probed, the being checks one PC per round in that manner until he is sure that they are friendly Immortals. If any probe is blocked by a PC's shield, the being speaks to the Immortal of Matter who was first contacted, again by telepathy, and asks that the PC lower the shield. If the PCs use Power attacks, the other mind uses a defensive *Wrap* and does not contact them again.

If any PC probes the other mind, the results are as follows. N'grath: Sphere of Matter, PP 1,200, hp 1,335, A-M 100%. Earthlord: Sphere of Matter, PP 1,100, hp 0, A-M 100%. Each being regenerates Power and hit points at the rate of 1 per round.

If the being completes its probe of the party, it speaks again to the PC of Matter, and asks that the party proceed down the left corridor to the next open room, about 100 yards away, where it will meet with them.

One round after contact is completed, a nearly identical contact and request is made. The other's mind is of the same great strength, but with a slightly different feel, and is obviously a different being entirely. PC power attacks are again blocked by a *Wrap*. However, this second contact asks that the PCs proceed down the right tunnel, again to a room about 100 yards away.

If a PC uses a *wish* to gain more information, the answer depends on the phrasing of the *wish* and the true identity of the being making contact. With respect to N'grath, the answer to the question, "Was the being who just contacted us the Earthlord?" is no. The answer to the question, "Who was the being who just contacted us?" is "The Earthlord," because of the *wish* N'grath previously used. If the being making contact was the actual Earthlord, the first question would be answered yes.

Other and more clever means may be used by the characters, and the one *wish* is the extent of N'grath's deceptions at this point. Neither the horde creature nor the Elemaster are physically nearby, and *know alignment* and other detections thus produce no results.

Part 5: Master of the Earth

9. Earthlord

If the party goes to the Elemaster's true location, he may be seen at the far end of a large rectangular hallway which is 200 feet long, 80 feet wide, and 40 feet high. He is incorporeal, and detectable only by magical sight or by Aura. As the latter cannot be disguised, his true identity is apparent.

Using Aura communication, the Earthlord explains the current situation. He agrees to give the party the essence they seek in exchange for their help in defeating N'grath. He says that the traitorous creature still has many bodies, while his have been destroyed. N'grath can use those forms to do quite a bit of mischief throughout Cueball, and although the Elemaster is fairly confident of victory in the long run, he wants to avoid the many problems that would arise if N'grath were left unchecked for a long time.

The Elemaster has called for the help of a few Eternals of his Sphere, who are no doubt on their way. But in the meantime, the PCs have an opportunity.

10. N'grath

If the party goes to the location of the horde creature, or if they search for it after contacting the true Elemaster, they are attacked by its remaining forms. The DM may arrange the tactical situation in any manner desired.

The horde creature has lost its bid for control. It knows that the Elemaster, though almost defeated, has survived and has probably summoned help. Bitter at the loss and prepared to fight to the death of all its physical forms (and expecting severe penalties from the Hierarchy of Matter, if not permanent and total destruction), N'grath is determined to make its defeat as expensive as possible. It is trying to disrupt and destroy as much of Cueball as it can, and though it cannot destroy Immortal life forces, it can try to destroy their physical forms.

The many bodies of the horde being are busily destroying things throughout the Citadel at the time of the PCs' arrival. Upon learning of their presence at the lower gate, it brings all forms running to that area. The PCs may thus encounter only one or bodies of randomly determined size at first, but all others arrive within 30 rounds. The primary body is not brought into play until 14 or more lesser bodies are destroyed.

N'grath has one primary body for most of its life force, and currently has 24 other bodies as well. It and all of its bodies are immune to mental effects (*charm*, *hold*, *sleep*). Since the other bodies are very similar to avatars, a Power attack on any one body

affects the creature's single life force. The horde creature can initiate only one Power attack per round, regardless of the number of forms it inhabits. The creature can use *ESP* and *telekinesis* (up to 20,000 cn) as often as desired, at no cost in Power, and can select any one of its bodies from which to produce the effect.

Each of N'grath's spare bodies attacks with one bite per round. The Hit roll chart for N'grath is used for attacks by all forms. (A mortal horde creature is far less competent, each form attacking at its individual Hit Dice rating.) The creature's strength bonus applies to Hit rolls of the primary form, but not to the other forms. Any lesser body thus hits AC -3 with an unmodified Hit roll of 2, and AC -29 with a natural 20.

Although a horde creature is normally careless with its bodies, automatically forfeiting all saving throws, N'grath is carefully hoarding the pitiful remains of its once-great forces. All bodies have 100% A-M, and save versus non-magical attacks just as does N'grath's primary body.

Primary body: SP Matter; RK Eternal 3; PP 8,000 (current 1,200); A-M 80% (current 100%); AC -4; HD 38 (hp 580, current 365); MV 150' (50'); AT 2 bites; D 15d6 each (from Strength); ML 12; AL L; GT Str 85 (+15), Con 80 (+14), Dex 78 (+14); LT Int 63 (+12), Wis 56 (+11), Cha 46 (+10); PP value 104 (XPV 1 million +)

Other bodies (All AC -4)

Hit Dice	hp each	Number	D	XPV
21*	100	2	5-30	4,500
15*	60	4	3-18	2,700
12*	45	2	2-16	2,125
9*	35	6	2-12	1,600
7*	30	2	1-10	850
5*	25	2	1-8	300
4*	20	6	1-6	125
228	970	24		36,700

11. Wrapup

Five powerful Eternals of Matter are on their way to Cueball even as the PCs are being contacted by the two opponents in this nearly successful *insurrection*. Although all of his material forms were destroyed, preventing magic use, the Earthlord made a permanent Power expenditure to send a special call for help to the Hierarchy himself. If the PCs defeat the remaining forces of N'grath, the

relief squad arrives shortly thereafter. They otherwise arrive in the Citadel after one or more PCs have lost their material forms in battle, or after the party retreats from the still formidable horde creature.

If any of the PCs' material forms were destroyed in the confrontation, the Hierarchy of the victim's Sphere automatically grants the character enough additional power to create a replacement. The PCs would not have been sent into such a dangerous situation if the Hierarchs knew about it when the party departed for Cueball. However, no extra Power is granted if PCs were run over by Snowball. In that case, they must use their own resources to create replacement forms.

As long as the PCs try to help the Elemaster by fighting the rogue horde creature, they are given the essence they seek. Although he has no material form, the Earthlord still has the essence. He merely gathers his life force around the dagger and deposits the essence within it. The artifact then glows, the usual confirmation of the achievement of the goal.

The Eternal relief force finishes off N'grath, the horde creature, if necessary, and its life force returns to its Home Plane, one of the many Outer Planes. It requires several years to rebuild the forms it has lost, and much service to regain the Power permanently used in that pursuit. The Hierarchy of Matter does not destroy it, but seals it within its Home Plane for a suitable period of imprisonment.

The Immortals of all five Spheres are told of the infamy of N'grath, and (if applicable) the bravery of the young Temporals who helped defeat him. Other Immortal horde creatures fall under a cloud of suspicion, and all are closely observed in their tasks. Centuries pass before they can escape the shadow cast by the actions of this fell traitor. Perhaps the horde creature will reform completely, and become a productive member of the ranks of the Immortals once again. But perhaps the plane of N'grath will become a festering prison of an unrepentant beast, a danger to occasional wanderers who venture within...

Part 6: The Smell of Victory

For this part of the adventure, it is important to know exact physical details about the standard forms being used by the characters, especially hair and skin color, height, and weight. If you and the players do not have accurate information about these details, have the players decide them now. Caution them, if necessary, that the details cannot be changed arbitrarily; they are normal aspects of their everyday forms.

Preparations

The characters are given general directions to the *Outer Plane* in which the most advanced known technological society exists. The party may use *astral teleport* to get to a place near the plane, but the location is not known precisely enough to avoid some travel.

The PCs are also warned of the great potential danger of this trip. The plane is a trispace, and magic use is impossible. Magic is needed to enter it, and would seem vital to leaving it—and there lies the problem. Though it is easy to open a gate and make it permanent to theoretically allow free access across the planar boundary, the Hierarchs do not know what form that gate might take within the plane itself, or even if it will remain open.

The civilization they will visit is based on technology, rather than magic. The forces of technology are far weaker and less efficient than magical powers, but can still be dangerous. That alone warrants extreme caution. In addition, the local residents are human, and capable of reaching Immortality. Their society must be preserved and undisturbed.

If any PC asks, the Hierarchs agree to initiate a rescue operation to recover the PCs after a given length of time (measured in the local rate). One month is recommended as an appropriate period in which the PCs should be able to achieve their goal.

The party is encouraged to examine the plane from outside the boundary, using the most powerful magical means known, to find an appropriate point of entry. Without magic, entry far out in empty space is somewhat less than convenient. The characters are not harmed by vacuum, of course; they will still be Immortal. But the distance to their goal might be very large, requiring a long and possibly hazardous journey. It is better to take the time to find this civilization's planet, and then pick a point of entry into the plane that leads directly to it.

Objective

According to the Hierarchs, the essence of

smell can be found in a place that has a long name, in the language of the local populace: "Creative Fragrances Labs, Oakton Place, Skokie, Illinois." This is the local language, of course, and the PCs should learn it from other available samples before they enter the plane, since no magical aids will be possible there. The learning process can be considered both brief and automatically successful, because of the PCs' high Intelligence.

Because of the lack of magic, the dagger artifacts are useless within the plane, except as normal weapons. Some container for the essence must be found within the plane, so the goal can be transferred later.

PC Abilities

Although the characters may be concerned about their lack of resources, the Hierarchs reassure them. Magic is the only thing missing. The characters still have the use of Power attacks and Aura (though the latter is somewhat dampened), and their high ability scores and hit points should enable them to not merely survive, but succeed.

The characters' non-magical skills do apply. A former thief, for example, can climb walls, hide in shadows, and so forth, but tools must be obtained or crafted if lockpicking is needed. Former fighters may be masterful with certain weapons and combat techniques, and former clerics can Turn certain creatures that they may encounter (though none of these appear in this scenario). Former magic-users are notably deficient in non-magical skills, but that is to be expected by the nature of the profession.

Characters may walk and run at standard rates, but gaseous, transplanar, and transdimensional movement are impossible on this plane of existence. Technically, the PCs are able to fly, simply soaring along at a 360' (120') rate without any visible means of propulsion. However, such actions would disturb the natives greatly. They would also be detected by several bureaucratic agencies, who operate long-range devices capable of detecting aerial movement even of things as small as the characters. They are capable of highly destructive reactions to unauthorized flights. Flying should be avoided unless absolutely vital.

Equipment

The characters may take whatever non-magical items they desire, but encourage them to limit their weaponry. The world of their destination does not normally use swords or spears except in specialized settings. Most of the populace is unarmed, or

carries small daggers at best. About 2% or less visibly carry devices which propel small pellets at high speeds. These devices are too firmly based in the local technology to be properly duplicated in advance, but the party should have little trouble acquiring some after arrival, if they wish.

The characters are given clothing appropriate to their destination. This consists of pants and loose shirts with collars, both constructed of fine cloth with very tight and small stitches and fastened with buttons. Shoes and socks are of similar quality, but all without fasteners. A belt completes the basic outfit.

Since they will be dealing with mortals, who value material objects, the PCs should each take a few gems and coins. A maximum of 100 gp and gems of 1,000 gp total value (per character) is recommended, as more could both disturb the local economy and endanger the characters, should their wealth be revealed. The PCs are also warned to be careful about exchange rates and customs.

The NPC Party Member

Before starting this part of the adventure, Drekk stops by his Home Plane and takes on a new form, so he can blend in with the technological society without magical aid. The only humanoid form he has designed is a 6-foot, 6-inch-tall, heavy (230 pounds), alluring female with jet black skin and pure white hair.

DM Notes on the Destination

The world to which the PCs will travel can be considered a parallel earth. The settings described are those of two major cities in the United States, in the latter part of the 20th century.

The Culture

The histories of this civilization and our real earth's can be considered nearly identical. Two global wars have come and gone, and smaller territorial skirmishes are constantly raging. Many countries pursue an expensive nuclear hobby, spending vast sums on the creation of atomic weapons, but never using them, all the while ignoring widespread needs of the people, such as food, shelter, the arts, and so forth.

Fantasy as we know it has never appeared in this world. Magic spells, witches, and related topics have simply never been thought of. Fantasy literature is virtually nonexistent; the few instances being chil-

Part 6: The Smell of Victory

drens' stories, scorned by all adults. Science fiction is popular, and is often based on actual events and their extrapolations. Several major nations have regular launch schedules for both manned and unmanned rockets.

This complex and large civilization is far too detailed for complete coverage in this product. Specific settings in New York City (Manhattan Island) and the Chicago area are described, but much of the background details must be added by the DM, drawing on his or her actual knowledge of our real world. The few differences should make this a relatively easy task.

Plot Summary

The party arrives in a subway car in a dangerous section of New York City. After an encounter with local ruffians, they should acclimate themselves and decide on a general style of operations. They should make their way to Skokie, Illinois (a part of greater Chicago), some 800 miles away. They must search for their destination, a research and development laboratory for a major perfume manufacturer. Their objective is within, and can be obtained by any of various means. The party then must return to New York, find their exit gate, and leave the plane.

Player and Character Behavior

After the PCs arrive in this new world, and once the players realize the situation, take a moment to caution them. To properly role play the situation, they should pretend to be completely ignorant of the many minor details of society. Their characters are, however, familiar with human nature. They can also learn new details very quickly; with 20 Intelligence, even learning a new language or dialect can be achieved in a matter of hours or minutes. Details, locations, and general information are not forgotten once learned. If the players forget something, you should prompt them. The scenario can be a challenge to both the characters and the players. The roles will not be perfectly played since we cannot ignore so much of our knowledge and heritage, but a good attempt by each player can produce a wonderful game.

It is also appropriate to warn the players just before they begin that they should try to affect the civilization they visit as little as possible. They should avoid revealing their powerful abilities except when such is unavoidable, for sheer survival. And they should hide any evidence of their passing to minimize the side effects from their operations.

Power & Aura Use

Although the PCs can predominate by their sheer physical prowess, having Hit Dice, hit points, Armor Class, and ability scores far greater than any local native, their use of Power and Aura are valuable tools.

Each PC can still emit Aura at no cost in Power, but the act requires conscious desire and concentration, because of the dampening effect of the limited dimensions of the plane. Furthermore, the Aura effect can be directed at only one individual at a time, and is not an area effect. The maximum range is the same as normal, that of sight. The Aura can produce the usual effects, *charm* or *terror*, and the victim may make a saving throw vs. Spells to resist the effect. No adjustment applies to the save, regardless of the Immortal's Charisma.

Once an effect is produced, it does not vanish when and if the Aura ceases, but lasts for the standard duration. These non-magical mental effects are of somewhat lesser intensity than their non-magical equivalents. The *charm* is a general friendliness, a vague feeling on the part of the victim that the Immortal could become a close friend (but is not, yet), and is worth dealing with to that end. The *terror* is nearly unchanged, but lasts only until the victim has moved away from the Immortal by some distance, at least until out of sight and reach.

A direct Power attack on any native of this plane causes an atypical effect. The victim must make a saving throw vs. Spells, applying a -1 penalty for each 10 PP (rounded down) expended in the attack. If failed, the victim faints, collapsing immediately, and sleeps for a number of rounds equal to the amount of Power expended. This is a comatose sleep, and cannot be interrupted except by the injection of powerful stimulants. A probe, however, causes the victim to suddenly feel that he or she is being watched. The victim may imagine some minor sound or motion (the latter just at the edge of peripheral vision) to rationalize the occurrence.

Three Paths

The players may decide to handle their situation by one of three different methods, or a combination of them. The choice will probably be made during or shortly after their first encounter, which involves lower-class natives of a criminal group.

The PCs may decide to ally with or dominate the criminal classes, using the obscurity of such positions to good advantage. The primary disadvantages are the difficulties when

contact with other natives is required, and the ever-present danger of apprehension by officials of law enforcement. This path also involves travel by mundane and heavily congested means, and ultimately to burglary or some other illegal method of reaching their goal.

The PCs may take on the guise of the upper classes, using their valuables to maximum advantage. Using this method, they may simply purchase privacy, and may obtain high-quality devices for transportation. They may infiltrate their goal and even purchase their objective, all entirely above-board. The disadvantage here is the visibility of such positions; the PCs must take great care not to disrupt the economic or business elements of the society. Some memories of the PCs would remain in the minds of influential humans, and their resulting actions may alter the course of their civilization.

As a middle ground, the party may assume the roles of middle-class natives, blending successfully into the masses. They may use funds to a limited extent, combining many of the options of the upper and lower classes. The only notable hazards to such a path is that the middle classes are the favored prey of both criminal elements and government, and are expected to have very little money or intelligence. Evidence in contrast to either detail will arouse suspicion.

The DM should be prepared for any combination of the general approaches noted (and should realize that a fourth approach may be possible!). The party may decide to remain aloof, or may hire local natives. They may rent apartments and set up a business as a front, or might reside in abandoned buildings and remain hidden. They may travel to their destination by train or bus, airplane or private auto, or even luxury limousine or private jet. The choices may become limited by certain actions and results, but are virtually unlimited at the start of the adventure.

Exit

After reaching their final destination and acquiring their objective, the party must return to the point at which they entered the plane, depart, and then close the *gate* behind them. However, their *gate* is affected somewhat by the non-magical nature of the plane. Instead of remaining open, it oscillates. Once created, the *gate* permits entry into the plane and then closes. It re-opens periodically, about once per day, at the same local time at which it was created. It does, however, remain in the same physical location at all times.

Initial Events

1. Gate

Check for random astral encounters normally as the party heads for the plane of their destination. The plane appears very small, as if a silvery ball only two feet in diameter, since the number of points of access to the Astral Plane are few.

Examination of most of the planar boundary by using magical *truesight* reveals nothing but deep space. But at one tiny point, a planet is found, apparently that of their destination. The PCs can then focus enough to locate a major city. It can be seen as if from a great height at best, with minimal detail. The exact point of arrival cannot be determined at this range.

As previously noted, the characters are expected to create a *gate* into the plane and make it permanent. Otherwise they have no means of departure, and you may remind them of this. Furthermore, magical *plane travel* will not permit entry into the plane, as it fails at the boundary before passage is successful. More powerful magic is needed.

The *gate* is less than an inch in diameter when seen from the Astral Plane, but the characters know that it is nevertheless easily passable. All they need to do is touch it and move forward, and they will magically move through the *gate* and into the plane.

The PCs may wisely decide to disguise the *gate* so that some Astral creature does not accidentally wander through it. This can easily be done by a *wish* or a permanent illusion. *Invisibility* does not work, for the *gate* is not a creature nor a physical object. A blockage is also impractical, as it would prevent the use of the *gate* by characters as well. If some disguise is not employed, a creature does wander through much later, as the PCs return to the *gate* after reaching their goal.

Looking through the *gate*, characters can see glass windows a few feet away, with a few lights and a larger room beyond them. The arrival point seems to be a room of some sort, just two or three stories above street level, in the midst of the large city seen before from a distance. The area is completely uninhabited, and remains so for as long as the PCs observe.

If the characters do not like the scene, remove the *gate* and try again, but they reach the same location. This is the only place on the planet that can be directly reached by the *gate*.

2. Arrival

When the characters enter the *gate*, they find themselves seated along one side of a long rectangular room, occupying some of the many seats by the windows. More empty seats line the windows along the other side. Each row of seats is interrupted by two doorways, their doors apparently missing. Each end of the room has another door, each of these in place and each with a smaller window. The room is lit by glowing panels in the ceiling. A sign by each door gives the letters "I R T," and another glowing panel by each sign displays the number 3. The walls (and some seats) are decorated by colorful drawings of primitive sorts, many containing names and vulgar words.

The party has arrived in the last car of a subway train on the 7th Avenue Line of the IRT, a public conveyance. As soon as they appear, a hissing noise occurs, and sliding doors appear, blocking the open doorways. The train starts to move south, to the characters' left, leaving the 145th Street station in north Harlem (less than a block from the Harlem river). The station and train are underground. The time is 2:30 a.m.

3. First Encounter

The characters see the walls of the tunnel rushing by the windows, feel the rocking motion of the car, hear the clatter and rumble of the train as it increases speed on the track, and smell the traces of the previous millions of passengers of the train, although those are nearly obscured by the foul contents of the polluted air. This seems to be a rather distasteful place, and if it is typical of non-magical civilizations, such cultures are obviously much inferior to the norm in the rest of the multiverse.

About two rounds after the train starts moving, the south door slides open, and a native enters. Announce the fact, and read the following aloud.

The native is clad in a black outfit with silvery ornaments, very unlike your garb. His large boots make clicks as they touch the floor, apparently being soled with metal studs. His skin color is not pale but not dark, and his black and apparently unclean hair is as long as many womens'. A small trimmed moustache adorns the swarthy face. He is stockily built, heavily muscled but not fat, standing nearly six feet tall and weighing perhaps 190 pounds. His attitude is that of a Celestial or Eternal—in command of all around

him, and somewhat snobbish or disdainful. A bulge in one boot obviously (to your eyes, at least) conceals a dagger-sized weapon, and his posture and gait indicate that others may be tucked into his pants, concealed by a vest but within easy reach.

In fact, now that the whole impression is considered and as he looks you over, he acts much like a bugbear chieftain who is examining goblin slaves.

This native is quickly followed by seven others, similarly garbed. Some have similar coloration to the first, though two are deep brown with very curly black hair, and one is pale-skinned with dirty blond hair. Their heights and weights vary, but none are less than 150 pounds or 5 1/2 feet tall. Unlike the first, many of these bear scars of battle. The faces of some are scarred in a different way, with ugly pock marks perhaps being the remnants of some untreated or improperly handled disease. Most appear to be armed in ways similar to the first; none carry their weapons openly.

As they proceed into the room, you notice that the natives all seem to be of the same tribe. They all wear black leather vests with silver ornaments, mostly studs, and the back of each is adorned with a hand-painted emblem crudely representing a flaming wolf's head. Below the emblem is the word "Fangs."

The Fangs do not attack immediately, but the following information may be needed.

Gang members (7): AC 6; HD 1+1 (hp 6-9 each); MV 120'(40'); AT 2 daggers; D 1-4 each; Save F2; THAC0 18; ML 8-9; Int 8-13; AL L.

Gang leader (1): AC 5; HD 3 (hp 20); MV 120'(40'); AT 2 daggers; D 2-8 each and see below; Save F6; THAC0 17; ML 10; AL L; Int 14.

The gang leader (called "Mig," who was the first to enter) has 17 Strength, and gains a +2 bonus to all Hit and damage rolls. He has the equivalent of Expert mastery of the dagger. He gains a +4 bonus to all Hit rolls with it, and inflicts 2-8 points of damage, or 4-16 if his unmodified Hit roll is 19 or 20. He can throw it to ranges of 20/30/45 feet. He may use the dagger defensively to gain a -2 AC bonus vs. up to two attacks per round.

The gang members all have Strength scores of 14-15 or 16-17, gaining a +1 or +2 bonus (respectively) to Hit and damage.

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Their Constitution scores (needed for unarmed combat mechanics) are each 9-16 (1d8+8). Two gang members (Bruno and Butch) have Skilled mastery of the dagger, for D 1-6, double damage on a 20 only, throwing ranges 15/25/35 feet, and the same -2 defense bonus.

One other gang member, Knocko, is Skilled with a blackjack he carries. Damage is 2-4 points. A victim with up to 16+ Hit Dice must save vs. Death Ray when hit to avoid Knockout, Stun, or Delay (see Master Set Players' book, page 22), but this will not affect the PCs (to his great surprise, if he attacks).

The other four Fangs (Big Chuck, Raoul, Stiggie, and the Cub) have no weapon specialties.

After seeing the party, the gang moves in peacefully but with intentions of robbery or extortion, using a preset plan. Most of them sit down exactly opposite their victims, staring at them. Bruno and Butch take standing positions blocking the nearest exits, while cleaning their fingernails with daggers. Mig sits down by one of the victims, stares at them for a bit to see how gutsy they are, and then explains that he and his friends are working their way through college, and would very much appreciate a donation. He even claims that it's tax deductible. The gang will try to avoid excessive force, but will also try not to allow the victims to leave until they have paid—preferably all of the money they are carrying, unless a sufficiently desperate plea is offered. The gang members are skillful at moving to block their victims' routes, so that the victims must either start the fight or pay up.

At least one gang member, and possibly several, will make advances to Drekk (as he is a black female at the moment) and urge her to join them and abandon the PCs. Drekk does not, of course, but may play along to distract and divide the gang.

The PCs have no cash in which the gang is interested. The gems are unmounted and thought to be colored glass. The coins are more interesting, but also believed faked. In any event, the items would bring little from the gang's contacts. Some of the party's equipment might be of interest, but also of little value. Their weapons would be valued, but nothing else.

This particular group of victims is more capable than the gang's typical prey, of course. If they wish, the PCs should be able to take on the gang with minor problems. However, if the characters kill any of the gang members, fairly serious trouble results. From fingerprints and subsequent descriptions by witnesses, the characters may find that they

are openly hunted as dangerous murderers. In this society, killing in self-defense carries a stiff penalty, unless one has both witnesses and powerful friends.

The best method for the PCs to handle the gang is by unarmed combat. Any character can "pull the punch" to the extent of inflicting any amount of damage they choose (from 0 to 4 points) while still forcing the victim hit to roll 1d20 and subtract his Constitution from the result. A total of 1 or more results in a Stun (duration 1 full round), and the victim must save vs. Death Ray with a +4 bonus or suffer a Knockout.

The train continues moving as the encounter continues, stopping approximately every 4 minutes (40 rounds). After departing from 145th Street, the next stops are 135th, 125th, 116th, and 110th (Central Park North). The last stop is the intended destination of the gang. The train then continues on a 7-minute stretch as it angles over to the 7th Avenue Broadway line, stopping next at 96th Street and then (continuing below Broadway) stopping at 3-minute intervals at 86th, 79th, 72nd, 66th, 59th (Columbus Circle by Central Park South), 50th, 42nd (which connects to a transverse line to Grand Central Station), and 30th street (Pennsylvania Station, a major connection). After pauses at the latter two stops, it continues down to the south end of Manhattan.

4. Decisions

After handling the gang—which may involve a simple slugfest, or may entail Aura use or Power use—the characters will probably discuss what to do from here. If they speak with any of the gang members, the latter express their amazement at the party's power, and hesitantly invite them to join the Fangs. This is in their own best interests, and is not as abrupt as it sounds. Membership in the Fangs has been recently depleted by losses to authorities, and these members assume that the PCs are the rough-and-tumble type. After all, they were not only on the subway at that hour, but were able to defeat Mig himself, a formidable figure in the eyes of many of the Manhattan street gangs.

This is not an unwise move. The characters need some form of local contact to find out where to get more detailed information, and may seize this opportunity. They should not spend their nights out mugging victims, of course, and should be able to coerce the gang members into more peaceable activities, especially if they offer some sort of financial rewards for doing so. Through these minions, the PCs may find both lodging and

libraries for research, and can easily and unobtrusively learn the local methods of communication, travel, and (to a limited extent) commerce.

If the characters do not avail themselves of the services of these rowdy, but easily cowed ruffians, they must take some other route to the same goals. And the details must unfortunately be left to the players' imagination and the DM's skill, as detailed notes on the whole of Manhattan obviously cannot be included here.

Whatever the party's choice, refer to the following information for specific aids in handling the ensuing situations.

If the players want to rush into things, you should caution them, explaining that their characters are too intelligent to do that. The complexities of this society contain many pitfalls, and although the PCs could fight their way out of nearly any situation, it would be far too noticeable. Rash action is risky and a character forced into incorporeal form can only be of little use. Mortal discovery of the PCs' status and power would be bad; no magic is available to remove the memories or restore the status quo. As the mission need not be rushed, a period for study and adaptation is definitely in order.

Local Operations

The characters have so many options at this point that you, as DM, should be prepared for nearly anything. The following details cover many of the critical aspects of the situation, but by no means all. The minimum map requirements are included in this product, but if you have your own map of Manhattan, that will be far more useful and realistic. If you are familiar with the city, better yet.

The party should not lose sight of the primary goal of locating and retrieving the essence of smell with a minimum of problems. They should stay in Manhattan only long enough to learn details of the culture, devise a plan of action, and execute it.

Read the details before you continue. As the adventure proceeds, make up details as needed, noting those with any crucial aspects that might appear more than once.

The general notes are divided into the categories of people, places, and other topics.

1. People

Workers

Most of the two million people of Manhattan belong in this general category. They work at jobs of all sorts, most from morning

until dusk, but others during the night. Most employment takes place indoors, within large buildings constructed for the purpose of working.

Workers may be of any age, size, color, ability scores, and so forth. They are mostly 1/2 to 1 Hit Die, with a few exceptional types of 1 + 1 to 3 HD. Unless special protective clothing is needed for the job, most workers are AC 10 to 8.

Most workers mind their own business. If interrupted, some are friendly, some brusque, some rude, but few violent. Almost none initiate conversations with strangers.

This category includes those who are self-employed, some in fairly lucrative positions (such as those engaged in illegal commerce), most with average or minimal incomes (such as the Fangs and other gangs, beggars, etc.), and a few with sporadic and barely survivable financial rewards. Many people claim to have no work, and receive remuneration from state and federal agencies, but most of these derive pleasure and some income from other unreported pursuits.

Non-workers

About 10% of the people are unemployed. Of these, 90% are students. The others spend their time simply existing, some unable to work, others unwilling. Many wander about aimlessly. Non-workers are likely to start conversations with complete strangers, in hopes of material gain.

Law Enforcers

The large and powerful organization of policemen, detectives, and other specialists consists of over 5,000 men and women, about one for every 400 civilians. These enforcers are primarily busy with countering the actions of organized criminals, spending over 75% of their time and efforts on such groups. They also handle sporadic individual criminal actions, but these are less important and may be ignored if organized criminals are operating nearby.

The laws of the area are complex, and many are contradictory. Not one of the people of the city knows all the laws. A profession of legal interpreters is somewhat allied with the criminals, as the two groups spend most of their time earnestly working to defeat the efforts of the police by exploiting the nearly unavoidable errors inherent in executing complex laws. And in over 95% of the cases in which the police succeed, the convicted criminals are sequestered for a short period (often trained by other criminals so they can avoid their previous errors) and then released.

Some policemen are allied with criminals, but these are rare. More common are those who accept gratuities in exchange for favors. Such minor activities are technically violations of the laws, but are generally ignored.

Law officers are usually willing to offer directions, advice, and so forth unless busy with other matters. They should be offered gratuities for such services, though never if their supervisors are nearby. Some accept if the transaction is secretive enough, and are friendly thereafter (and expectant) if encountered repeatedly.

Most officials of law enforcement carry firearms, as do over 80% of the criminals. Refer to *Weaponry* for more details.

2. Places

General

Most places of noteworthy interest nearby are located in the area called Mid-town, which lies roughly between 30th and 60th streets (north-south). This one small area contains more in the areas of business, transportation, communication, and entertainment than any other site on the planet. One area on the east side even contains an admittedly feeble, but earnest, effort at world government, with embassies from most of the nations.

The Gate

The connection between this plane and the Astral Plane oscillates, appearing every night at 2:28 a.m. along one side of a subway car which is stopped at the 145th street station of the IRT. It remains open for only two minutes, and vanishes at 2:30 a.m., seconds before the subway pulls out. The *gate* cannot be seen from this plane, but may be accidentally entered by some unfortunate late-night travelers. Since passengers at this hour in this location are infrequent, few accidents should occur.

Harlem

If the party allies with the gang, they can find places to stay in north Manhattan in the immediate vicinity of the subway in which they started the adventure, between 5th and 7th Avenues (east-west) and 135th and 145th street (north-south).

Encounters in this area may be prompted by the characters' skin color. Over 90% of the local residents are dark-colored, openly scornful of light-colored folk. Even if PCs are in the company of known local gang members, some high-ranking neighborhood leaders eventually advise them to depart, as their very presence can lead to violence.

Even if the PCs *charm* several of the residents, others suspect the sudden changes of attitudes (possibly attributing them to drugs or bribes), and the eventual result will be assassination attempts using firearms.

Moneychangers

Generally, the optimum value of the PCs' material assets can be obtained from banks, jewelers, and similar establishments located south of 43rd street in the financial district of Manhattan. Minimum value is obtained from criminal contacts or legitimate pawnbrokers found north of 110th street. Some midrange value is offered by various establishments similar to all of the above located between 43rd and 110th. (See *Cash*.)

Research Facilities

Extensive information on nearly every imaginable topic can be found in most public libraries. The largest is at 5th Avenue and East 41st Street. Many others are located at various universities (such as Fordham, at West 61st and Columbus).

Information about living people, existing businesses and criminal activities, and sensitive affairs of government are not found at the libraries. Such details are either unavailable or located in secure installations, such as the police computer system, files of private businesses, and government agencies.

Subways

By using these underground trains, the PCs can go nearly anywhere in the city in a very short time. They are widely used and crowded at certain times of the day. At other times, especially during midnight and 5 a.m., they are mostly used by criminals.

For simplicity, assume that entering the subway costs one dollar, which enables the user to take any and all of the routes (no transfer fees) until exiting from the system. A rough map of the entire system is provided on the inside cover.

3. Other Topics

Appearances

The reactions of the natives are almost completely based on visual impressions. The color and garb of the PCs is a critical factor to their operations. If visual elements are in contrast to the characters' actions, adverse reactions and results may occur. For example, a PC who tries to deal with a high-society gem merchant while appearing to be a member of the lower class is either ignored or arrested.

Generally, when locals and PCs are simi-

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larly attired (with respect to social class), reasonable reactions are more common than when different garb is worn. A dark-colored person wearing an expensive business suit (upper class) who encounters other dark persons wearing ragged and dirty clothes (lower class) may be hated and feared, or may be admired, depending on the circumstances. The same applies to light-colored persons in similar situations.

Gender also plays a role in reactions, though not quite the same as in our real-world society. Males and females are both common in the workplace. Among the lower classes, some males consider females much like treasure, objects to be collected and appreciated but not respected. This attitude is occasionally found in the middle and upper classes also.

Hair length and style is a major indication of class. In the middle and upper classes, male hair is expected to be fairly short. Small well-trimmed beards and moustaches are uncommon but not rare, and indicate liberal, but not reactionary, attitudes. Females of these classes usually have longer hair, neatly styled, but some have shorter hair which is also acceptable. Any male with long hair or an unkempt beard, and any female with unruly or unusually colored or styled hair, is assumed to hold radical views and be dangerous or of a lower class.

Among the lower class, hair length and style follows no set pattern and is usually determined by passing trends. Such styles are unique to this class, while others imitate or duplicate those of other classes.

Cash

When the PCs try to convert their material assets into the local currency, various problems may occur. All can be avoided by forethought and action.

The basic exchange ratio is 500 dollars per gold piece. This is the abstract value of the gold itself on the local market, considering its degree of purity as well as its weight. Gems, however, are worth only 50 dollars per gp value.

The basic exchange ratio applies only in ideal circumstances. Converting funds into local currency requires interaction with local residents, and these individuals are suspicious types, always watching for criminal dealings. To get this maximum value, PCs must appear to be the types of local residents who would logically have these amounts and types of valuables. A far lower exchange rate is quite possible, to a minimum of only 1% of the figures given above.

For example, if a PC finds clothing appro-

priate to an upper class professional native and then visits a jeweler or gem importer, he or she might be able to create a convincing explanation for having gems which are beautifully finished and of high quality, and be able to convert them at the best ratio. But if any of many possible errors are made, from simply wearing the wrong clothing to displaying ignorance of the worldwide financial market relating to the transaction, the businessman may suspect illegalities. At best, he will then offer less than the basic rate. At worst, he may pretend to complete the transaction but in such a way as to allow the local police to quickly locate the PC, this being followed by accusations of criminal activities.

If a PC were to enter a business catering to the lower classes and try to convert valuables, a very low rate would apply, as the proprietor would assume that the valuables were less than genuine. If they were of high value, he reasons, the customer would have gone to a better establishment. A minor dispute about the relative value is expected (unlike the style of the upper-class business), and some minor compromise is common. But the businessman holds the desired commodity, the local currency, and will not bend very far, even for good friends (i.e. even if *charmed*).

Costs

The DM may simply apply actual costs of objects and services (from our real world) where needed in the game. Refer to mail order catalogs, newspaper advertising, and so forth to get accurate details.

Communications

Other than simple conversation, the telephone system is the most widely used method of person-to-person communication. Nearly everyone in the city can be contacted if their assigned number is known. After a few minutes of study, the PCs can easily deduce the operation of the instruments, as well as a quick means to bypass the coin-activating system on public units.

Another novel communications device can be found in nearly every home. This is an audio-visual creation called a tee-vee, or television in the long form. Although it would be optimally useful in conjunction with the telephone system, it is instead left independent, its broadcasts controlled by large businesses who primarily use it to display advertising, news reports, and morality plays.

Many individuals operate audio devices called CB radios (not to be confused with broadcasts of the same name which have programming very similar to the tee-vee), and these can be used for semi-public communi-

cation. Police monitor certain frequencies, but most are used only by private individuals, using an odd slang and codes when some privacy is desired.

Damage Recovery

Although several major hospitals are nearby, the characters must avoid professional medical attention. The forms they are using are not human, though they may appear so. These forms are built to accommodate high ability scores, and to withstand hard vacuum and all temperatures within a very wide range.

The plane is equally hostile to all Spheres, so all characters regenerate at the rate of 1 point (PP, hp, and ability score points, if applicable) every 24 hours.

A character may invent medical techniques that can cure disease and damage in the PC forms. To do so, a character must first spend 12 or more hours studying technical medical texts (which are available at some libraries). The character must then make a standard unmodified Wisdom check. If successful, the character realizes how to integrate the local information with other known data about the Immortal forms and produce a curative serum. If the check is failed, the character is uninspired and unable to find a cure. Failure by one character does not preclude others from making the attempt, at the same chances.

If the serum formula is discovered, the cost of the raw materials is \$50 per vial, and \$5,000 for equipment for processing and a suitable, sterile work area. Clandestine operations using hospital equipment and supplies may be successful, depending on the methods used. This could reduce the cost to as little as \$10 per vial, spent on supplies not found in the hospital. Each vial of serum cures either one minor disease or 1-4 points of damage. Major diseases can require as much as five vials.

The special equipment required can be purchased by mail or in person at certain medical or scientific research supply houses. If the purchased equipment is discovered by law enforcers, it is mistaken as paraphernalia for manufacturing illegal drugs, and appropriate legal and investigative procedures will begin. The serum has no effect on the local mortals (except possibly as a poison), and is nearly impossible to reproduce outside this plane, based on the local chemicals and technology.

Food

Although the PCs do not need sustenance, their continued abstinence may arouse curi-

osity in their allies. Social dining is an expected element of any group they deal with, from thugs to bankers. The PCs may eat and drink if they wish, and incur no serious side effects.

The Goal

Though they have a name as a clue to the place the essence of smell might be found, the PCs may wish to do more research. No one they encounter in the New York area knows of "Skokie," although "Illinois" is widely known to be one of 48 adjacent political regions of the country.

The key field is the perfume industry. Standard periodicals and newspapers may reveal the names of a few companies who produce smells (perfumes), but these are major corporations or brand names, and are of little help. Characters, however, can quickly find trade periodicals which serve the cosmetics industry, and discover hundreds of manufacturers and their locations, not merely the retailers and major distributors.

By carefully examining a few of these trade publications, the PCs quickly find a small article in a recent issue that refers to a breakthrough in the perfume industry. A revolutionary new technique and rare materials have been combined by a research lab in the Chicago area, the Creative Fragrances Labs, in Skokie, Illinois.

A quick look at an Illinois map shows the large city area to the northeast, Chicago. A brief examination of a detail map of the city shows that Skokie is less than 10 miles north of the center city area called "The Loop," or a similar distance east-northeast of the large airfield called O'Hare. This is the final destination of the party.

Theft

The characters may have to steal items or funds at first, but most necessities can be purchased once the PC valuables are converted to the local currency. The characters should pay for what they get, reimbursing their early victims appropriately, otherwise they will receive fewer XP awards at the end of the adventure. Some supplies may be obtained only by theft, but funds should be left as compensation. In nearly every case, the owners first feel indignant, but then, if the funds are ample enough, decide to pocket the money and ignore the matter rather than involve the police. The notable exceptions are large organizations, such as hospitals and department stores, at which every item must be accounted for and at which the prosecution of even minor thefts is required, to make public examples of the thieves to discourage others.

Transportation

During operations in Manhattan, the characters may walk, ride, or operate mechanical vehicles to get from place to place (see *Vehicles*). This area has the most extensive network of public transportation in the world, including trains, buses, cars with drivers, cars alone, and other more exotic devices.

When the party heads for the Chicago area, they may use any of the aforementioned means, or may ride in aircraft, either public or private. Chicago has a similar network for transportation, and Skokie is on one of the regular routes.

The return trip to New York may again be made by any of various means.

Vehicles

That nearly everyone has a semi-automatic vehicle is immediately obvious to the PCs. They are used for private and public transportation, construction, and war. Vehicles are the symbols of the technological and mechanized civilization itself, and are greatly loved.

Much of the city is laid out in roadways. These are normally congested with vehicles which are parking, moving, or waiting to do either activity. The motions of the vehicles are regulated by automatic electrical signaling devices or by simple signs.

An Immortal PC can learn to operate a typical vehicle in about 6 rounds without instruction, or half that if coached. When first operating such a vehicle after the learning period, a character has a 30% chance of having an accidental, but minor, collision with a stationary object, but thereafter can easily avoid nearly all potential incidents by exercising forethought, observation, and Immortal reflexes (Dexterity). The many laws governing the movement of vehicles should be studied before such an experience, or at least summarized by a tutor. Also, any infraction has a 20%-80% chance of attracting the attention of a police officer. A paper certificate authorizing the operation of the vehicle is required when dealing with the police, but is otherwise useless, and its necessity may often be avoided by using *Aura* or *Power to charm the officer* or put him to sleep (respectively).

The speeds of these vehicles are markedly greater than normal walking or running speed. The following figures are approximate, but will suffice for game purposes. At a very slow pace (10 miles per hour), vehicles move at 150 feet per round. At a speed common on side streets (27 MPH), they move at

400 feet per round. On larger roads through the city, they may reach 600 to 700 feet per round (40-48 MPH), or even 800 (55 MPH) or more. On large segregated highways, speeds of 1,000 feet per round (68 MPH) or higher are common. To convert a speed in miles per hour to feet per round, multiply by $14 \frac{2}{3}$.

Collisions between moving vehicles and unarmored natives can be hazardous, and slay hundreds annually. Collisions between the vehicles themselves, though easily avoided, slay thousands. Most incidents are caused by improper operation of the vehicles, though some are purely accidental or caused by mechanical failures.

In a collision, automatic damage is inflicted on both victims outside the vehicle and those within it. Base impact damages (Vehicle Table 1), apply for every 100 feet per round of velocity. For example, a vehicle with a base damage of 8 points, but moving at 750 feet per round, inflicts 8×7.5 or 60 points of damage. The base damage applies normally to pedestrians struck, but is modified for those within the vehicle, depending on the object struck, as given on Vehicle Table 2. If any victim of a collision would be slain by the impact damage, he or she may save vs. Death Ray, and if successful, is reduced only to 1 hit point, regardless of damage indicated.

Any pedestrian with whom a vehicle might collide can able to avoid the accident entirely, if sufficient warning is given. If enough warning and maneuvering room are available, the victim may save vs. Breath Weapon (possibly with bonuses or penalties) to dodge, and if successful, takes no damage. As a general rule, if the warning time is one-half round or more, the victim may dodge automatically. A saving throw applies to any lesser warning time. For example, a vehicle moving at 800 feet per round can be automatically dodged if the potential victims see it coming from 400 or more feet away. If the operator of the vehicle is trying to hit the pedestrian, the saving throw indicates half damage, not complete avoidance.

If an Immortal wants to try to stop a vehicle by getting in its way, the character forfeits the usual saving throw vs. Physical Blow, and takes full impact damage. To find the chance of stopping the vehicle, add the Stop Factor (given on Table 1) to the character's Strength, then subtract the vehicle's unmodified impact damage. Roll 1d100; if the result of the roll is equal to or greater than the calculated chance, the vehicle comes to a complete stop. If the attempt fails, the Immortal is run over, and takes full impact damage a second time. If this occurs, no saving throw is per-

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mitted to avoid death by cumulative damage, though the usual save applies (vs. Physical Blow) to reduce the added damage by half.

Vehicle Table 1: Base Impact Damages (per 100'/round velocity)

Vehicle	Base Damage	Stop Factor
Motorcycle	2	80-90
Car, small	3	75
Car, large	4	60
Truck, small	6	50
Truck, large	8	35-40
Bus	10	25
Train or subway	12	0-10

Vehicle Table 2: Damage to Vehicle Occupants

For Collision With	Modify Base Damage to
Pedestrian	One-quarter damage, save for no damage
Small stationary object	One-half damage, save for one-quarter
Large stationary object/vehicle	None; full damage, save for half
Vehicle moving toward collision	None; full damage, save for half
Vehicle moving away from collision	Special: subtract velocity of other vehicle before calculating damage

Weaponry

Because of rather strict laws regarding weaponry, most of the population of the city appears to be unarmed. Unknown even to the Immortals, the situation is quite the opposite; over 30% carry knives or daggers, over 50% carry minor assorted weapons (such as blackjacks, spear-like devices which they claim are to deflect rain, tiny explosives, etc.), and 40% carry weapons of a new category called firearms.

Firearms are small machines designed to hurl specially constructed pellets at high speeds by means of controlled explosions. They come in many shapes and sizes, and can inflict damages from 1 to 144 points, depending on the weapon size and the mastery of the user.

Small hand-held firearms (handguns) inflict one die of damage, from 1d4 to 1d10, based on the size of the pellets used. They can be fired three times per round. Large hand-held firearms (shotguns and rifles) inflict two dice of damage, from 2d4 to 2d10. They can be fired twice per round. A third category of larger and more complex firearms is used in warfare, and may inflict far more damage at

similar rates, but these are irrelevant to the city and this scenario.

Any firearm user gains a +4 bonus to Hit rolls. Mastery of the weapons can add further bonuses, given on Firearms Table 2. Police officers are Skilled at least, and many are Experts or Masters of the weapons.

The base range of a small one-die firearm is 30/60/120 feet, or double that for a large two-die weapon. Ranges increase with levels of mastery, calculated by multiplying base ranges by a given factor from 2 to 5. For example, a character with Expert mastery in small arms has a range multiplier of 3, and so can fire effectively to 90/180/360 feet. Damages also increase with mastery, as given on Firearms Table 1.

Two special effects may occur if the unmodified Hit roll is high enough. Either effect can be avoided if a saving throw vs. Death Ray is successful. On a Hit roll of 16 or more, the victim may be Stunned for 1 round. A new save is required each round. The Stun continues until one is successful. On a Hit roll of 20, the victim may be instantly reduced to zero hit points. If the saving throw is successful, the victim takes normal damage (dropping to 1 hp at minimum), and is automatically stunned for 6-15 (1d10+5) rounds.

Any Immortal hit by a shot from a firearm may save vs. Physical Blow to take half damage. Possible stun and kill results apply normally, using the same saving throw.

Firearm users can only fire a limited number of pellets before reloading is required. The number varies from 4 to 8 for small arms, 2 to 20 for large ones. Reloading time is a fixed number of 1-4 or more rounds, depending on the size and type of ammunition required.

Anyone with Expert or greater proficiency may, if desired, choose to inflict minimum damage or to use a damage range of lesser mastery, to avoid slaying a victim.

Special equipment may be acquired for use with two-dice weapons (only) to increase the accuracy and effective range. These optical devices magnify the target image. Each is rated from 1 to 10; the rating applies as both a bonus to the Hit roll, and as an extra increment of range. For the latter, each point of rating adds 30/60/120 feet to the normal weapon range.

Any small hand-held firearm may be used as a blackjack, for identical damage and special effects. If the firing chamber is loaded at the time, however, a successful hit may (50% chance) cause it to fire. Experienced police officers and criminals who use firearms usually make sure that the device has an empty

chamber.

Firearms Table 1: Damages

Level of Mastery	Ammunition Size			
	Small	Medium	Large	Huge
Basic	1d4	1d6	1d8	1d10
Skilled	1d6	1d8	1d10	1d12
Expert	1d6+2	1d8+2	1d10+2	1d12+2
Master	1d6+4	1d8+4	1d10+4	1d12+4
G. Mas.	1d4+8	1d6+8	1d8+8	1d10+8

Firearms Table 2: Other Data

Level of Mastery	Hit Bonus	Range Factor	Special Effects
Basic	+4	1	None
Skilled	+5	2	2x Damage (19-20)
Expert	+6	3	3x Damage (19-20)
Master	+7	4	4x Damage (19-20)
G. Mas.	+8	5	4x Damage (17-20)

Basic ranges are 30/60/120 feet. All information applies to small firearms (handguns). For large hand-held firearms (shotguns and rifles), double all figures in Table 1 (and the range as well), but do not modify those in Table 2.

Firearms are common in trispaces, but rare in four- or five-dimensional planes because ammunition used may spontaneously explode in such areas. In a tetraspace, the chance is 50%; a pentaspace, 75%. The chance is checked per ammunition unit (bullet) when it crosses the planar boundary. Each explosion is a tiny *fire ball*, exploding in a 5-foot radius and inflicting 1-10 points of fire damage to each victim within it. Each ammunition unit within the blast must be rechecked for explosion immediately, at the same chances as given above. The recheck is made only once, even if caused by multiple blasts.

The same chance of explosion is checked whenever surviving ammunition units are exposed to normal or magical fire of any sort.

Dimensional aberrations which produce trispacial characteristics also affect these ammunition units, improving their stability. Firearms may thus be found in some parts of the Prime and other planes, especially when such aberrations have lasted for long periods of time.

Off to Chicago

Once they have learned the minor details of this society necessary to smooth operations, the party must travel part way across the con-

continent to reach their objective. To do this, characters may travel by any of various public or private means. If they are careful, they have no unexpected encounters en route. If they are wanted by one or more law enforcement agencies for illegal actions, the PCs may have extreme difficulty using public transportation, but may easily use a private vehicle to make the trip.

1. Greater Chicago

A general map of this area is provided, but characters should not need to consult libraries for research materials except to find the exact location of Oakton Place, Skokie.

Skokie, a part of greater Chicago, is about 10 miles north of the business center of Chicago, and the same distance east-northeast of the O'Hare airport. The laboratory being sought is in a new industrial park called Oakton Place, nestled between roads called Oakton, Niles, and Gross Point, in the shadow of a major interstate highway known as I-94.

If the PCs are being reasonably careful, the process of finding Oakton Place can be assumed, and not played out. Refer to your map of the business layout, and review the following details before proceeding. Since the characters can succeed by any of several means, from burglary to simply purchasing the essence, be prepared for anything.

2. Creative Fragrances Labs

Overview

This small business operates in two buildings, a one-story office area connected to a larger two-story factory. Areas between the two and adjacent to the factory are for vehicular use. The outer perimeter is enclosed by 15-foot-tall barbed-wire fencing with a security alarm system.

Because of occasional attempts at theft, the entire complex is brightly lit during the night, and is always guarded. Furthermore, the local police are summoned automatically if the top of the outer fence is touched, or if any one of several alarm buttons (in each guard shack and in the receptionist's room) is pushed. If this occurs, a large number of police arrive in vehicles within 2 minutes (12 rounds), their approach heralded by sirens and flashing lights.

Offices

The one public entrance leads to a large reception room containing several plush chairs and one receptionist behind a desk. She can reach any location in the plant by telephone. Two other doors lead to offices and to

a parking area. Both of these doors are locked and cannot be opened from inside the room except by electronic means; they have no visible locks.

One hallway passes the business offices and leads to an employee lunchroom.

Factory

The production area can only be reached through the offices or through one of two large and secure gates, which are manned by guards armed with firearms. The guards only permit passage by employees who have appropriate identification or by shipping vehicles whose entrance is preapproved. Any unexpected arrival is detained until approval is given by at least one officer of the corporation. Because of some recent infiltration attempts by other perfume manufacturers, service trucks and other normally routine visitors are not allowed entry until their home offices are contacted by telephone to verify their presence.

The three separate areas of the production building are the manufacturing room, the warehouse, and the labs.

Personnel

The 31 employees of Creative Fragrances Laboratories (CFL) include the following categories. They all know each other by sight, if not by name.

President	1
Secretary/receptionists	2
Maintenance/cleaning	1
Staff businessmen	6
Research chemists	4
Warehouse/shipping	5
Manufacturing	8
Security guards	4

Hours

Creative Fragrances follows a standard work schedule of 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Everyone stops for a half-hour lunch sometime between 11:30 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., at preassigned times.

One guard armed with a firearm mans each gate during business hours. At 4:00 p.m. a third guard arrives, inspects the entire facility, and is the only person on the premises until midnight. At that time the next guard arrives, inspects, and is left alone from 1:00 a.m. (when the first leaves) until 8:00 a.m., when the two day guards arrive. One of them inspects the facility again before the night guard departs.

Special NPC Notes

The president of CFL, Dr. Howard Fuller,

is worried. Since he announced his company's invention of a startling new scent last month, and previewed it at a national trade show, his competitors have been stirred almost to a maniacal frenzy. Four attempted burglaries and two attempts at infiltration have brought his company to a near panic, as the employees now realize that theirs is indeed a major breakthrough, and is thus coveted by many companies far larger and more powerful than theirs.

Dr. Fuller suspects that agents of another firm, Sensations Inc. of New York, are behind the whole thing. SI is one of the largest such firms, and is the only one known to have definite connections to large organized criminal groups. Their president, Tony Calizza, has called several times, offering up to half a million dollars for the formula. Fuller has refused so far, since he has calculated that the profits to CFL should be almost four times that in the long run.

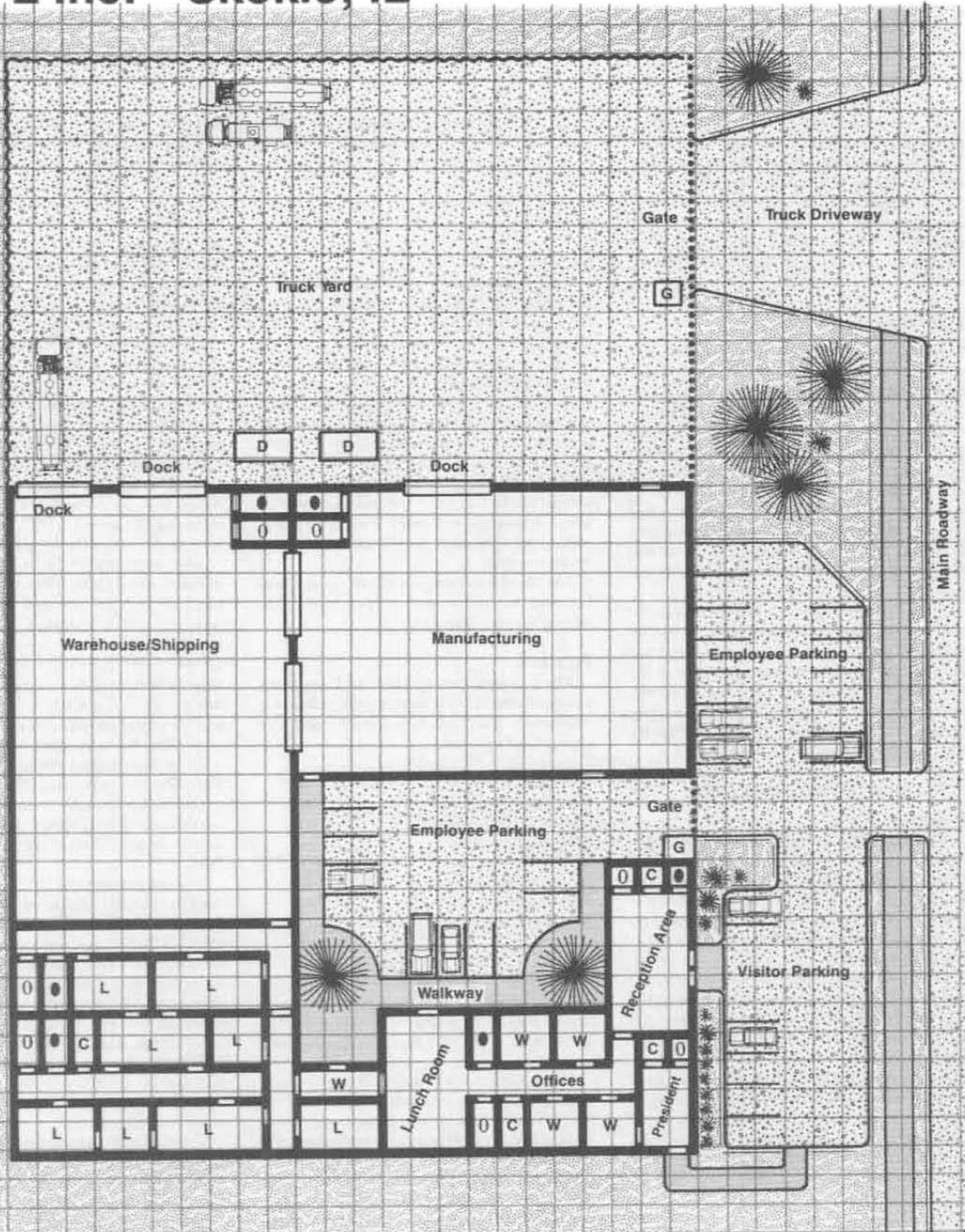
The secretary/receptionist is a shapely blonde named Galena Wainwright, who was hired about 8 months ago. She seems to be somewhat scatterbrained. She is a high-ranking agent for a government agency known as the National Intelligence Agency, planted here to gather evidence against SI by infiltrating the industry. Galena has accompanied corporate officers to various meetings and trade shows, and has accumulated quite a bit of information about SI's shady dealings. She now hopes that SI will become desperate and be caught in something, since it would be a starting point leading to the exposure of the other details she has relayed to the NIA.

Though unarmored (AC 8), Galena has 5 Hit Dice (30 hp), 10th level thief abilities (OL 58, FT 54, RT 50, CW 96, MS 58, HS 44, PP 65, HN 70), and several weapon specializations. She is an Expert with dagger (D 2d4, ranges 20/30/45) and blackjack (D 1d4 + 1, save at -1 vs. knockout), and a Master with a medium-sized handgun (+7 Hit roll bonus, base damage 1d6 + 8, ranges 120'/240'/480', quadruple damage on a natural Hit roll of 19-20). She keeps two of each weapon, one set concealed in her desk and the other in her handbag.

Except for the guards, all the other workers and executives are 1 to 2 HD, with no special proficiencies. Some of the shipping workers carry small daggers (D 1-2).

The security guards have 2 or 3 HD, and are not armored (AC 9). The night guards wear bulletproof vests and have steel inserts in their soft caps, the former providing AC 4 vs. firearms and the latter AC 0 vs. attacks from blackjacks and similar devices. All the guards are

CFL Inc. Skokie, IL



D	Dumpsters
W	Work Area
C	Closet

L	Lab Area
	Door
G	Guard House

♂	Men's Restroom
♀	Women's Restroom
1 Square = 5 Feet	

Skilled with a huge handgun (D 1d12, +5 Hit roll bonus, ranges 60'/120'/240', double damage on 19-20) which they carry constantly, and a special club called a nightstick (D 1-2 + stun).

One of the regular truck drivers who picks up outgoing shipments twice each week is secretly employed by SI. He has not yet been able to acquire a sample of the new perfume, but has become friendly with two of the shipping workers, and expects to succeed in a burglary within a week or so.

3. Achieving the Goal

The CFL chemists have distilled the very essence of smell. Each person interprets its scent in a unique and personal way, believing it to be their favorite aroma—roses on a dewy morning, charcoal-broiled steaks, or whatever. In some respects, it is far more valuable than even Dr. Fuller imagines; from another point of view, it will arouse emotions and promote conflict.

The labs have produced only 9 ounces of the clear fluid, which they created by accident. They do not know exactly how it happened, and cannot reproduce it, nor have they found a method of duplicating it. This is their dilemma.

One ounce has been used up in testing and promotion at a trade show. The chemists are

being very careful with the rest, since their plans have been unexpectedly delayed by the problems mentioned above. The 8 ounces which remain are kept in separate 1-ounce vials. Two samples are kept by the president in his private office safe, four are in separate areas of the labs, and two others are in a bank vault a few miles away, the location of which is in a locked file cabinet in the office adjacent to the president's.

The PCs can achieve their goal by obtaining any one vial of the essence. If approached openly, Dr. Fuller will sell one for \$750,000. He will sell all of them, along with what few research notes are available, for 2 million dollars. He will sell the entire company, including the buildings, for 5 million. Any such transaction is entirely legal and above-board, with appropriate documents and reports submitted to official agencies (including tax collectors). Cash is not acceptable; payment must be made by paper representing the cash (certified cheque or cash transfer authorization), issued by any bank. Although Fuller is curious about the purchasers' business and backgrounds, he does not pry nor insist on disclosure of such information, as long as the legal requirements regarding the sale are met. Whatever the PCs say or do, he assumes that they are agents of Sensations Inc.

If the party tries to steal the essence, they

may have a rough time. The security systems and personnel can easily summon the local police (who arrive within 2 minutes), and the agents of the law are careful, well-armed, and numerous enough to defeat the PCs. If any of the policemen suddenly fall asleep (succumbing to Power attacks) or act strangely (charmed), the others assume that special poisonous gases are being used, and use their firearms to maximum extent.

4. Success or Failure

Assuming that all goes well, the party can make their way back to New York by any of the now-familiar means at their disposal.

If the PCs are captured by the local police, they are subjected to the maze of the society's legal system. They may be released after paying a fine, or may be incarcerated, depending on the severity of their illegal deeds. A good legal interpreter (lawyer) may be able to have their case dismissed, regardless of their actual activities, by exploiting loopholes in the laws. With enough publicity, Sensations Inc. may hear of the matter and offer to both pay the fines and hire the characters for a more complex burglary attempt.

At no time should the PCs reveal their Immortal status or true goals. Their cover story (lies) are thus detected by elaborate



Part 6: The Smell of Victory

electronic sensing devices, but the police are unable to force the truth from them. This does, however, encourage the police to press whatever charges are applicable to the maximum extent.

If the PCs are incarcerated in a prison, they are rescued by other Immortals within a month or two, and can escape by way of another *gate*. Some traces must be left to make the escape appear to have been accomplished by more mundane means. By this time, some vials of the essence have been sold and circulated, and other Immortals buy or steal one to complete the mission.

Back to the Big Apple

If, while in the Astral Plane, the characters disguised the *gate* by which they entered this plane, no new complications arise. The characters may be successfully disguised as local citizens, peacefully driving or flying east; or they may be fugitives and wanted criminals, forced to sneak about and evade the police. In either case, however, only the predictable events occur.

If the characters did not disguise the *gate*, they hear news reports as they head back (on the automobile radio, from a portable radio carried by a nearby native, or some other means) to the effect that a giant wormlike animal, 100 feet long and 15 feet across, has appeared in the tunnels of the New York subway system. It swallowed several people who were working in the subway corridors and then dug its way back into the earth. The huge tunnels it created have caused the collapse of several apartment buildings in the Harlem area, and the authorities are worried that it may surface again. They attribute its size to atomic radiation, explaining that it is a mutant earthworm grown to amazing size. This opinion is bolstered by its black color, apparently the result of extreme heat.

From the description given, the PCs immediately realize that this sounds like a nightcrawler, the largest of the undead nightshades that occasionally wander the Astral Plane. It is extremely dangerous to mortals, and causes extreme and widespread damage before it can be slain.

1. Drekk

The demon immediately points out that a nightshade spoils everything within 120 feet, and this effect could endanger the essence. Furthermore, he feels uncomfortable about fighting a member of his own Sphere. Such an act could reflect badly on him once the party returns to the Hierarchs.

If this is not the last essence to be recovered, Drekk supports the party at all times, and attacks the creature if the others demand his assistance. To do otherwise would endanger the primary mission.

If this essence of smell is the last objective in the series, however, Drekk gets an idea at this point, which he does not relay to the PCs. If he can somehow get the essence and return through the *gate* before the others, while bringing about a situation that destroys one or more of the PCs' material forms (and a good portion of the city besides), he is furthering the goals of his Sphere without endangering the primary mission. He cannot possibly be faulted; it is all within the rules as set forth by the council of Hierarchs. He is right; as long as he can deliver even one vial of the final essence, he will receive honor and credit for wreaking destruction. Though these are humans in this plane, this is *not* the Prime Plane he has sworn, as an Immortal, to protect.

Drekk does not attack the PCs directly. That is foolhardy and risky. But he may suggest battle plans for fighting the nightcrawler that involve gathering some of the Fangs, the gang encountered at the beginning of this adventure, or others from the Harlem area. If he can maneuver the situation properly, leaving the party even for a brief period, he can gather some mortals of his skin color (black) and incite them to attack any PCs of lighter colors. Some of them are no doubt carrying firearms, which can be quite formidable weapons. Drekk may also call the police and inform them of the party's whereabouts, and claim that they are terrorists heading into the subway system to plant bombs. This brings many heavily-armed police, and possibly other more effective troops as well.

Drekk can contact the nightshade by non-magical telepathy, since they are both of the same Sphere and of similar heights of power. He does not do so unless he is free to promote destruction, but then tells the nightshade details of the party's approach, to help its chances in combat. He also warns the monster that it will probably be defeated by the PCs, whatever it does, but promises it that he will put in a favorable report on its actions. This encourages the nightshade to fight more fiercely and viciously for the honor of its kind, knowing that its actions have Immortal scrutiny.

If Drekk is free to promote his Sphere, you should play him as devious, traitorous, and nasty as you can imagine. He has behaved up to this point, and the characters have probably accepted him as just another Immortal.

He hopes that their caution has waned enough to give him an opening, just one chance, to be true to his goals.

2. Manhattan in Chaos

The entire population of this island has been warned of the rampaging creature, but the nightshade makes no further appearances after its initial foray. Occasional rumblings come from the bowels of the earth, a constant reminder of the threat below.

The 7th Avenue line of the IRT is closed down between 149th and 103rd street; extra buses are running to carry the extra traffic. Other subways are running normally, but public notices have been posted to both warn of the danger and inform users that the government and the subway system refuse to accept any legal liability for damages. If a citizen gets eaten, nobody can be held responsible.

National guard troops have been called out, and are stationed at each subway entrance in the closed sector. About 30 are at each station. Each of these persons is 2 to 4 HD, AC 5, constantly alert (+1 bonus to surprise rolls), and heavily armed. All have Skilled or greater mastery of the special firearms they carry, which are two-die weapons that fire small one-die ammunition in a burst of 20 shots in half of a round (automatic rifles, base D 1d4). They may fire one burst per round at most. When attacking, roll once to represent the first four shots; the Hit roll for each subsequent group of four shots is automatically one higher than the previous number. Roll again for each new burst.

Example: A Skilled but otherwise typical soldier (HD 2) shoots the weapon at an Immortal (AC 0), and has rolled an 11. The +5 bonus for Skilled mastery raises this to 16, which hits AC 3. The next groups of shots hit AC 2, 1, 0, and -1; thus, only the last two groups (of four shots each) hit the character. The total damage is eight bullets for 1-4 points each, or 8-32 points; the character may make a saving throw vs. Physical Blow to take half damage. A good initial Hit roll can thus be devastating.

The characters can easily get into the restricted subway system by getting off at a nearby underground station that is receiving service and walking or flying from there. If they do so, they evade the armed troops who are stationed aboveground. They see several large holes which the nightshade has dug, but they do not find the creature itself; it finds them. If the monster has been warned by Drekk, it automatically surprises them, and gets one free attack, tunneling up from

below. Without surprise, its approach is detected by a slight rumbling, and the melee can proceed normally.

3. Invader

The nightshade has no magical abilities on this plane, but its presence still spoils all consumable items within 120 feet. Since the essence is in liquid form, not stored in the dagger artifact, it is ruined if it comes within range of this creature.

Nightshade (1): SP Entropy; RK mortal; AC -4; HD 30 (hp 210); MV 120' (30'); AT 1 bite/1 tail; D 2-20/2-8 + special; Save 130; Int 19; AL C; XPV 26,000 (PP 2.6)

This monster's Hit roll normally equals the negative Armor Class hit (for example, a roll of 10 hitting AC -10), but on this plane it is blind and suffers a -4 penalty, as its senses are magical. If Drekk has inspired the creature, it gains a +4 bonus, bringing its Hit rolls back to normal. Both bite and tail are poisonous, and a hit from its tail has a 1 in 8 chance of instantly slaying the victim (though an Immortal may save vs. Physical Blow in this case, reducing the effect to a mere 25 points of damage). A Hit roll of 19-20 with the bite means that the victim is swallowed, losing 1 Hit Die or level per round from Energy Drain. An Immortal victim may save vs. Power Drain to resist the effect entirely, but if unsuccessful, the victim suffers the loss of 25 PP and 5 hp per round (temporary, regenerated later).

The monster's deadly poisonous touch forces mortals to save at -2 or die instantly. An Immortal victim saves vs. Power Drain. If this is failed, the victim takes 1-6 points of damage for a number of rounds equal to his Constitution score modifier (i.e. 4 rounds for a score of 20), and must make an unmodified Constitution check each round thereafter, any failure causing death by poison. If any healing potions are at hand (see *Damage Recovery*), one vial neutralizes the poison, as long as it has not come within 120 feet of the monster. It is otherwise spoiled and useless.

The nightshade is immune to poison, charm, cold, and all non-magical attacks of mortal power except certain firearms. Because it is mortal, its ability scores cannot be attacked directly. However, a Power attack forces it to save vs. Death Ray or be slain instantly; it is not a native of this plane, and not put to sleep by the effect. Its saving throw is a 3. The monster is completely immune to the usual one-die firearms, takes half damage

from two-die firearms, but takes normal damage from special firearms such as those wielded by the troops stationed above.

If a PC with clerical ability tries to Turn undead, the monster may save vs. Spells, and if successful is only Turned, not destroyed (the standard result for clerics of level 26 or more). It can use its tail attack as it flees.

This encounter is very dangerous unless properly handled. If the characters are careless and allow the essence to be spoiled, they must either accept failure or return to Skokie to get more. If the PCs either do not have any healing potions or allow theirs to be spoiled, they may die of poison during the melee. If Drekk is not carefully watched, he may send even more enemies to confront the party.

In combat with the creature, the PCs may gain AC bonuses of -2 to -12 by hiding among the steel girders and other obstructions in the subway tunnels. If they hit the nightcrawler with punches, they may become poisoned by the contact; the chance is 1 in 6 per successful hit. Firearms may be put to good use here, but the creature is immune to one-die handguns. If the PCs encounter and charm (or scare) a group of guardsmen, they may acquire the special weapons that inflict full damage to the monster.

A far easier and more productive way of handling the situation is to simply converse with the monster. This is not obvious since the creature has no visible eyes and its gaping mouth seems suited only for swallowing victims. If any PC uses a probe on the nightshade, telepathic communication is instantly opened. If contacted in this way, the creature is quite impressed by the strength of the PC minds and can be quickly calmed down. If the PCs reveal their Immortal status, it becomes absolutely meek.

The nightcrawler can be told about the location of the gate, and goes there voluntarily just to escape this awful plane of existence, in which it has no senses nor magical powers. It need not enter a subway car to get up to the gate's position; its bulk is such that when the gate opens, out it goes.

If the nightcrawler is slain, its great mass collapses into a vile liquid in 6 rounds, and drains away. The only remains are a few dozen gems (2,100 gp value) and a sword +2, +4 vs. bugs (non-magical on this plane) that it had previously swallowed.

4. Departure

The characters may become concerned when they discover that the gate is not at its expected location, but someone is bound to suggest that the PCs test it at the same time

they arrived, about 2:30 a.m. If none of the players think of this, Drekk suggests it. If Drekk acted against the party in the final encounter and was subsequently attacked and destroyed by the PCs, his life force (which remains nearby) communicates the information by using Aura.

The subway tunnels remain closed off from the public until the authorities decide that the worm has departed or been destroyed. If the PCs inform them of the latter, they investigate, find no traces, and wait another 48 hours before reluctantly opening the branch of the system.

If the subway is operating when the PCs decide to depart, the characters must be sitting in the same approximate location in the last car of a train at the proper time. The gate opens at 2:28 a.m., and they tumble over backward into the Astral Plane.

If the PCs depart while the subway is still closed down, they must fly up to the proper location near the boarding platform to be in the right place. Since no mortals are in the area, this is an easy matter. The transition effect is similar, except that no tumbling occurs.

In no case is the gate visible from this plane. It is a magical effect, and cannot be detected by any means except passage through it.

Once they arrive in the Astral Plane, the characters find 5-13 humans floating nearby in the company of a male archon. Six of the humans are members of a Harlem gang (the Stompers), and the others are unemployed humans formerly addicted to cheap alcohol. The humans fell through the gate by accident on various nights. They are all cold sober, scared silly, completely defenseless, and totally unharmed. They have been subjected to lectures on Law and Goodness from the archon for over 30 hours straight. Since they understood none of its speech, they have had an easier time of it than might be expected.

The characters should first transfer the essence from a vial to a dagger artifact for safekeeping. To take care of the humans, the PCs must remove their memories of the experience, easily accomplished by one or more wishes or other means. After sending them back into their own plane, the PCs must close up the gate. The drunks benefit indirectly, as their old addictions are permanently removed, and they probably assume normal positions in the workplace. The gang members probably return to their established habits, though the PCs may easily tilt their perspective slightly to improve their chances of success. The characters have no other encounters on the last leg of the journey, returning victorious to the council of Hierarchs.

Part 7: Fight for Honor

When the characters return all five of the dagger artifacts to their Hierarchs, the mission is successful. The great storm can now be stilled, and the threat to the multiverse ended. (If the characters do not return all five daggers, the Hierarchs assign other Immortals to the task of returning the rest of them.)

The PCs and their Hierarchs gather in the same room in which they were given the first puzzle. Some formalities are followed, and thanks are offered. More importantly, the PCs are granted Power by the Hierarchs as a reward for their services.

XP/PP Awards

Find the total XP awards for all creatures defeated in the series of adventures (remember that 10,000 XP equals 1 PP). Include awards for creatures driven off and not slain, but do not include awards for creatures routinely dealt with, such as the great breve of the tonals.

Add the following XP awards for role playing and problem solving in each stage of the adventure. All awards apply per character, but only to those characters who acted in the ways mentioned or whose players participated in solving the puzzles. The degree of success in the latter is irrelevant; the sincere attempt is what counts. In debatable cases, decide in favor of the players and characters.

Part 1 (Maximum 10 per character): For the starting word-puzzle, the base award is 10 PP. Subtract 1 PP for each clue revealed.

Part 2 (Maximum 11 per character): Award 1 PP for each of the following.

Masquerading as a fire creature when arriving at the starworld.

Giving the elemental ruler the honor and respect appropriate to his noble status.

Giving the Firemaster the honor and respect appropriate to his Hierarch status.

Openly revealing name, status, and goal to the Firemaster.

Agreeing to and participating in the fight with the Firemaster.

Defeating the Firemaster (apply to all PCs participating).

Finally, add 5 PP per character if the phoenix is captured without being permanently slain.

Part 3 (Maximum 17 per character plus 2 bonuses): Add 1 PP for each of the following.

At the start, leaving the plane at least once and re-entering in hope of finding a better

starting point.

Avoiding all damage from the first collision with the semiquaver.

Assuming the form of a tonal before encountering the first rest.

Asking about the origin and method of the names of the tonals.

Being the first to try ESP to learn how to travel on the portays (slurring).

Solving the problem posed by the first encounter with a rest.

Solving the first logic puzzle, posed by the crotchet, Deecronine.

Realizing the usefulness of the globes of elemental material in any golden room (whether or not they are actually used).

Figuring out how to pass one of the remaining rests (maximum 1 PP per character).

Solving the second logic puzzle, posed by the minim, Beeminate, using all clues (worth 4 PP if no clues are revealed; subtract 1 per clue, no points if have to be given the answer).

Giving the breve Eabretu the honor and respect appropriate to his Eternal status.

Finally, add 5 PP for solving the last logic puzzle (posed by the breve Eabretu), identifying the rogue atonal.

Part 4 (Maximum 13 per character, +3 bonuses): Award 1 PP for each of the following.

Using Power probes to try to find the first notions encountered.

Properly role-playing the effects of the notions initially encountered (maximum 2 per character).

Using magical telepathy at least once to communicate with any notion.

Using a wish to augment the effect of any one Power probe.

Successfully locating any one notion by use of a Power probe (augmented or not).

Using any magical means of detecting the goal (maximum 1 per effect, awarded to the first character using the effect).

Using a probe on the djinni in cloud form.

Deducing the exact problem with the djinni's mind (maximum 2, 1 per notion, but the exact notion must be guessed).

Properly role playing the effects of either of the two large notions.

Being the first to suggest bestowing a mind barrier on the djinni (apply to one character only, and regardless if the effect is used or who creates it).

Successfully clearing the djinni's mind (apply to all characters).

Giving the notion of taste the honor and respect appropriate to its status.

Trying the flavor of the notion of taste, without resisting.

Escorting the djinni to his Home Plane, rather than slaying him.

Part 5 (Maximum 11 per character, +5 bonuses): Award 1 PP for each of the following.

Entering the plane on or near Cueball, rather than within it (apply to all characters).

Investigating the odd positioning of the moons without disturbing them.

Being the first to detect the vibration of Snowball's approach (apply to all PCs touching a surface at the time).

Avoiding Snowball while remaining in the orbit corridor.

Bypassing the Uppers by using teleport or other means.

Cooperating fully with the first gate (baak) but without revealing a truename.

Bypassing the Lowerers by using teleport or other means.

Noting the odd behavior of the second gate (baak) in comparison to the first (apply only to the first character who openly comments on this).

Being the first to guess that the Elemaster may be in danger.

Being the first to realize that if something endangered the Elemaster, it may be too much for the party to handle.

Shielding a probe within the Citadel, and refusing to lower it.

Discovering the identity of N'grath before proceeding down either corridor (apply to all characters).

Locating and/or meeting the Elemaster before encountering N'grath.

Surviving the whole affair without loss of one's material form.

Being the first to ask about N'grath's fate (one character only).

Recommending that N'grath not be destroyed, but rather suffer some other punishment (first character only).

Part 6 (Maximum 27 per character, +15 bonuses): Award 1 PP for each of the following.

Reshaping any coins brought so that they have no identifying characteristics.

Disguising the gate into the plane, to avoid accidental entry by others (apply to all characters).

Seizing and interrogating at least one member of the Fangs.

Preventing the Fangs from committing criminal acts while accompanied by the party.
Using disguise to avoid problems with the lower, middle, or upper class people of the city (maximum 3 PP per character).

Creating any amount of curative serum (apply to all characters).

Recompensating anyone from whom the party is forced to steal.

Learning how to operate any one vehicle.

Finding employment of any sort.

Assisting Galena and/or the NIA in their investigation of Sensations, Inc. (either with or without their knowledge).

Keeping Drekk with the party at all times near the end of the scenario.

Leaving the essence and any vials of serum at a safe place, but within a reasonable distance, before approaching the nightshade.

Successfully communicating with the nightshade in any way (apply to all characters).

Dealing with the nightshade while avoiding any deaths among the PCs.

Removing the memories from the humans found in the Astral Plane.

Specials: Find the percentage of maximum possible value that the party gets for their coins and gems. Award 1 PP per 20% of maximum value (rounded down) to each party member (maximum of 5 PP per character).

Award 1-5 PP to each character who unobtrusively and successfully blends into the local society without causing any major problems.

Consider the players' performance in role-playing their characters' ignorance of the details of our real world, and rank them in order of success. Award 5 PP to the best, 4 to the next best, and so forth.

All Parts: Add 1 PP for each encounter in which a character definitely promoted and furthered his or her Sphere to a notably greater extent than all others without endangering the goals of the party.

Add 1-10 PP to each character who was played as a unique, memorable personality without causing strife among players nor between players and the DM. Some minor friction between characters is expected and irrelevant, but adjust the total downward if the chosen personalities noticeably interfered with everyone's enjoyment of the game.

Maximum total overall (not including creature XPV): 109 PP per character, +25 bonuses.

Convert the total XP for creatures to PP, add the bonus awards for role-playing and problem solving, and announce the totals to the players. Feel free to explain the methods used in calculating the totals, and even the specific instances that led to your decisions in debatable matters. If players make valid points in arguing your decisions, adjust the amounts as you see fit. But stick to your opinions if you feel that your original decision was correct! Open communication between you and the players can only lead to better games.

Duel

After the Hierarchs reward the characters, they start to discuss the final procedure of halting the storm. A problem immediately appears. The five dagger artifacts must be magically combined into one large device, and then cast into the eye of the storm. A Hierarch is the only one who can meld the devices, and obviously only one person can perform the final act. But who?

The characters are treated to a rare view of the sort of squabbling that takes place at the exalted level of the council of Hierarchs. Though aware of their audience, the rulers do get in a few verbal jabs before settling down. They quickly decide, however, that they are above such pettiness. They just as quickly come to a solution.

The characters are deposited in an Olympic arena, with a large audience of Immortals watching. They are to fight to the death, using any and all means at their disposal. When a contestant's physical form is slain, the victim must withdraw, and cannot continue to fight incorporeally. The one survivor wins the right for his or her Hierarch to perform the final acts and dispel the great storm. The Hierarchs all agree in advance to grant extra Power to each loser, so that a replacement of his or her standard form can be constructed at no cost to the contestants.

For this battle, each Sphere must be evenly represented—either one character apiece (4 PCs) or two (8 PCs). If the party is unbalanced, one or more PCs may have to drop out. However, the PP award for winning the fight applies equally to all the original player characters of that Sphere, whether or not they actually fight. The players of any competing characters are allowed to consult with any players of characters of the same Sphere who must drop out, in regard to strategy and tactics used in the battle.

As DM, you may either play the part of the Immortal of Entropy, Drekk, or may ask a player to take up the task. If you choose the former, be sure that you do not allow some

knowledge of PC actions to affect Drekk's decisions. If you take the latter option, be sure to allow the player some time to learn Drekk's abilities and weaknesses.

Personalities do not have much effect on this final battle. All the characters are fighting to win, by any means possible. The honor of their Sphere and their very Hierarch is at stake.

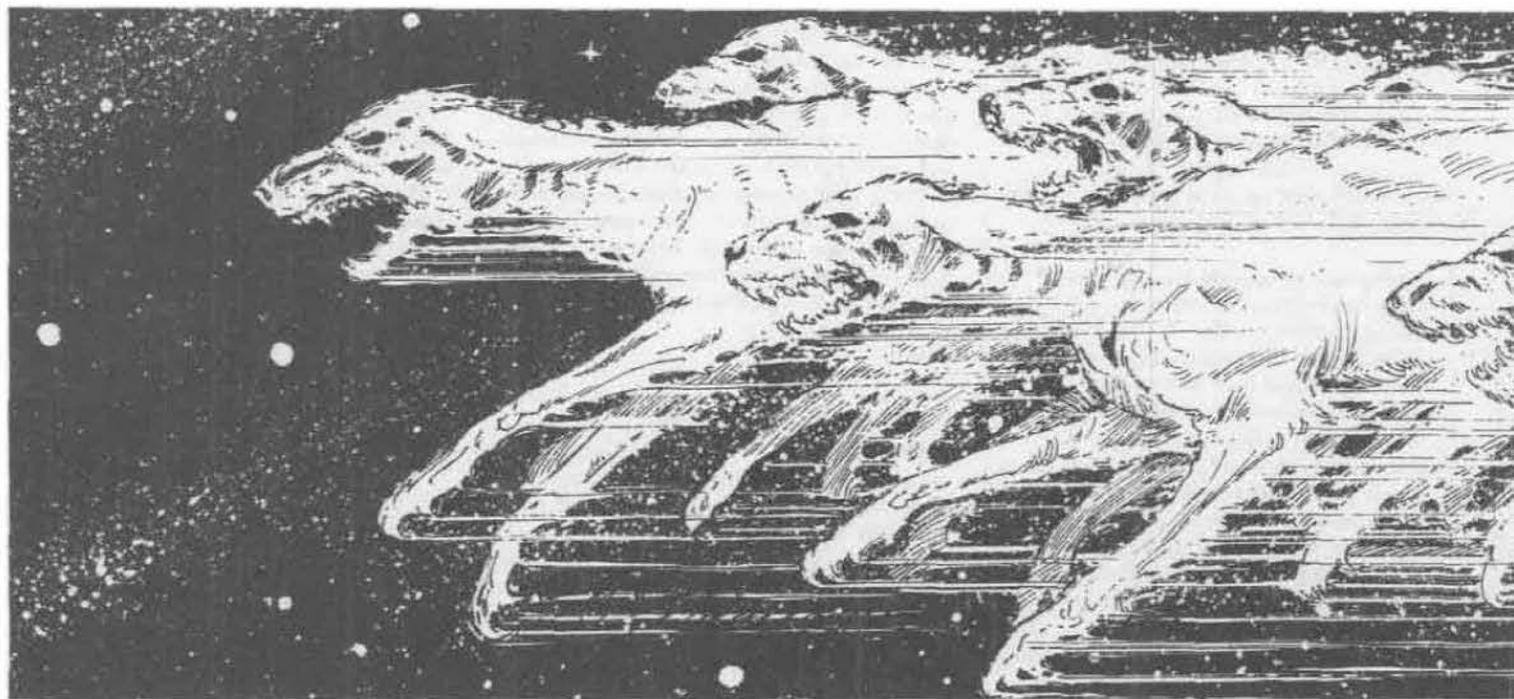
The players may choose one of three possible arenas (subject to any additional limits the DM may wish to impose). The first is a room 20 feet high and 360 feet square, located deep within a solid planetoid. It is surrounded by rock for miles in every direction. The second possible arena is a similar space in a similar location, but the room is 360 feet high. The third location is within a special plane of existence that contains absolutely nothing. The plane is a pentaspatial microplane, 5 million miles in each dimension. All three arenas have one common characteristic; none have any gravitational forces.

The contestants are placed in any starting position to which they all agree. The most common formation for Olympic meets is to be evenly spaced in a circle of large diameter. If the characters cannot agree on a starting position, the Hierarchs will place them in such a circle. The characters are permitted to act when a signal is given. Any character who leaves the arena (such as by *teleport*) loses by default.

When only one Immortal remains within the arena in material form, he or she is the winner. If multiple contestants expire in the same round, the one with the greatest number of hit points at the end of the preceding round is declared the winner. If a tie still exists, those contestants are returned with 10% of normal hit points and PP and must conclude the fight once again.

The noise of the crowd of Immortal spectators is audible within each arena, though they are actually outside the plane of combat and cannot be seen by the contestants. They cheer when each loser is removed, depending on their respective Spheres. When a final winner is apparent, the character is officially declared victorious by the Hierarchs, and the entire crowd applauds and cheers. The victor is removed from the arena and presented with a laurel wreath before the crowd and given a 10 PP bonus from his Hierarch.

Part 8: Conclusion



After the epic battle in the arena, one Hierarch is awarded the honor of ending the great storm. That being receives all five of the dagger artifacts, and must make difficult checks of all six ability scores to assemble them properly. The tasks are automatically completed successfully for a Hierarch, with ability scores of 100 each.

The Hierarch then bestows another award of 25 PP to the character who won the fight. An equal bonus is given to each character of the same Sphere who was present in the original party but who was forced to remain out of the contest.

Once the victorious PC is fully rested and restored, that character is invited by his or her Hierarch to travel together to the Barrier, to complete the task. The character carries the completed and filled artifact. This is a special honor for the character, as the Hierarch normally travels with guards or close friends. The PC is not the latter, as yet, but is an honorary guard for the occasion.

The Hierarch first checks the PC's knowledge of dimensional travel (which is satisfactory, of course), and then each being expends 50 PP per dimensional boundary crossed. After three shifts, the two suddenly appear before the vast maelstrom, with its huge eye looming in the center. The storm has grown considerably during the party's journey, and swirls about viciously. The region of the Dimensional Barrier has hostile bias, and the expense of Power for travel (quite large for

the Temporal, but minor to the Hierarch) will not regenerate quickly.

The Hierarch explains that the process of stopping the storm will take a few minutes, and cannot be interrupted. He will handle all the details, but the character must stand guard, just in case anything comes by.

When the Hierarch starts expending Power to activate the completed artifact, the storm increases in speed. The whirling maelstrom appears as a giant pinwheel of destruction, threatening to envelop the Immortals and sweep them away as leaves on the wind. Though suddenly enveloped by swirling gray fog, the two hold fast, and the Hierarch continues the procedure.

Suddenly, a pack of huge hounds appears in the fog, only 60 feet away and closing fast. The Hierarch is busy; the character must defend.

Spectral Hounds (6): AC -2; HD 10 (50 each); MV 150' (50'); each); AT 1 bite; D 4-24 + special; Save F10; THAC0 10; ML 12; Int 2; AL C; XP 2,500 each

The hounds are immune to fire, cold, and normal weapons. In addition to damage, a bite causes the victim to save vs. Spell. Failure causes a dimensional shift, which in this case forces the victim into the maelstrom. The character must immediately expend 50 PP each round to avoid being sucked away by the winds of the vortex. The character can keep spending 50 PP each round until he is too weak to resist the pull of the vortex. The

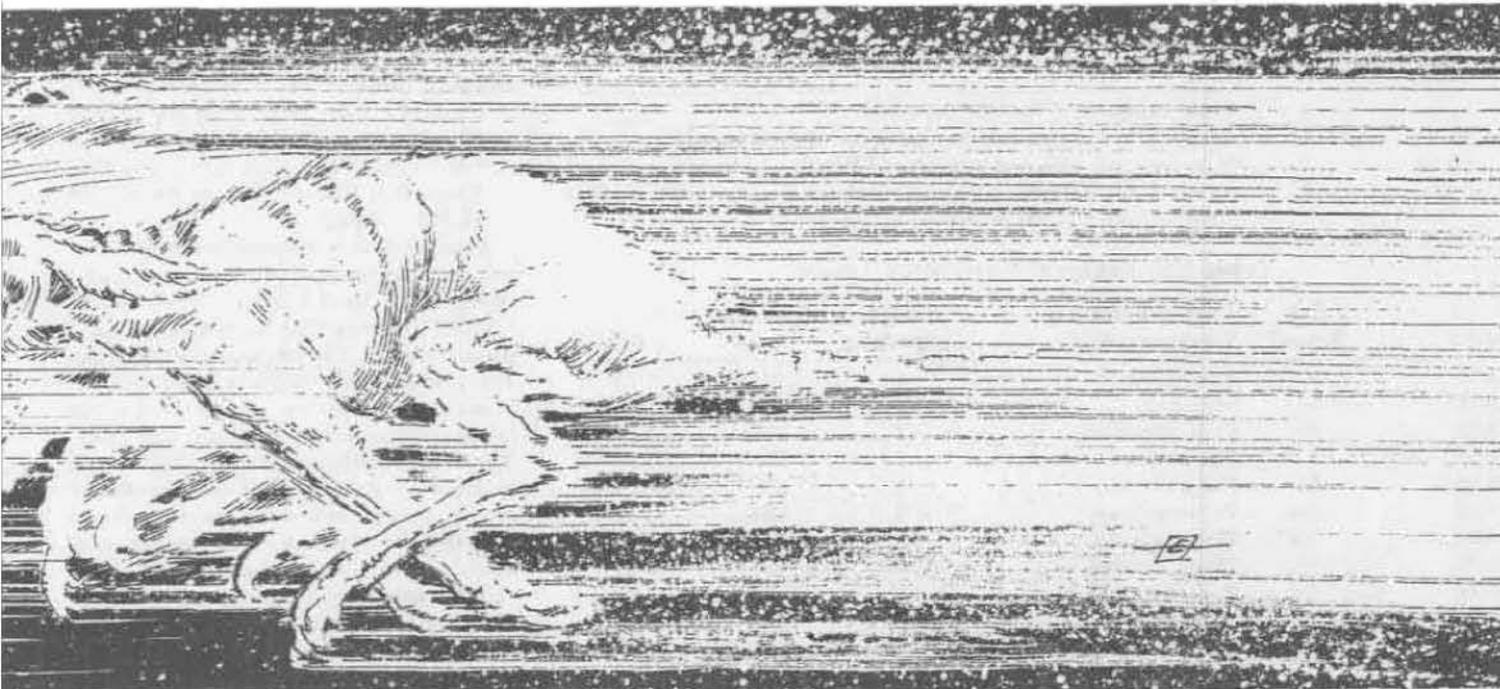
PP expenditure is temporary.

The hounds are thus extremely dangerous here (in their home). The character has a full round to act before they arrive, and should be able to slay some before they engage.

If the character slays them, the Hierarch continues working. Another pack of hounds appears 2 rounds later, at the same distance. If those are also defeated, another pack appears in the same manner, 2 rounds after they are destroyed, and so it continues. The supply of hounds is infinite, and the Hierarch is always busy.

When the character finally fails a saving throw or becomes too weak and is swept off into the vortex, a rescuing hand suddenly reaches out, and the Hierarch exclaims "It is done!" Grasping the character firmly, he waves his other hand and instantly obliterates any remaining hounds. The winds of the storm are already starting to die down, and the Hierarch transports the character back across the dimensional boundaries (requiring no PP expenditure by the PC). The character immediately gains any XP earned for defeating the hounds, plus a 5 PP bonus from the Hierarch.

"Good show!" exclaims the Hierarch as the two arrive safely back in the Astral Plane. "You have the courage and the will; all you need is experience. Perhaps you will reach Eternal status, and become one of my closest aides; you may even get my job. Work hard, and strive ever upward; your future is promising. For now, fare well!"



Astral and Ethereal Travel Tables

The column which bears the *Can Recur* heading on Tables E2 and A2 indicates if the encounter may occur more than once. "No" means it may not and must be crossed off the list when it is used. If an encounter with an adventuring party recurs, the DM may choose to use the same party or a different one, based on logical data (however, it may be impractical to create more than one party of this complexity beforehand).

The *Encounter Range* figure applies only if neither group is surprised. Surprise can cut the number by half or more. Immortals are just as easily surprised as mortals, unless they take magic to modify the chances. If one or more Immortals has *truesight* up at all times, the chance of surprise decreases to 1 in 6. A *wish* may be used in advance to negate one future surprise. The wording of the *wish* is also important, to be made by players alone.

Ref gives the rulebook and page number where the detailed descriptions of the creatures can be found. All refer to the DM books of the respective boxed sets: C = Companion set, M = Master set, I = Immortals set.

Table A1: Astral Encounter Frequency

1d12	Number of Encounters	Timing of Encounter(s)
1-5	0	None
6-9	1	Near end of the astral travel
10-11	2	Near start and end of astral travel
12	3	As 10-11, but a second group or creature approaches while the PCs are busy with any one encounter (DM's choice)

Table A2: Astral Encounter Types

1d100	Can Recur?	Type of Creatures Encountered	Number Appearing	Encounter Range	Ref
01-06	No	Adaptors	2-12	480'	M24
07-12	No	Draeden	1	12 miles	I38
13-18	No	Dragons, brown	2	720'	M27
19-25	No	Dragons, gold	2	720'	C29
26-30	No	Fleet, Merchant	1	1,080'	M41
31-35	Yes	Flickers	2-8	240'	I40
36-45	Yes	Immortals	1-8	180'	I
46-49	Yes	Jumpers	1-4	120'	I42
50-61	Yes	Nippers	36-45	180'	I44
62-68	No	Party, diaboli	4-7	180'	I37
69-82	No	Party, normal	4-7	180'	All
83-90	Yes	Protean (Astral)	1	720'	I46
91-95	Yes	Soo	2-5	120'	I48
96-00	No	Titan	1-2	180'	I48

Appendix

Table E1: Ethereal Encounter Frequency

1d12	Number of Encounters	Timing of Encounter(s)
1-5	1	At the midpoint of the ethereal travel
6-9	2	At the midpoint and near the end of the ethereal travel
10-11	3	Near the start, end, and midpoint of the ethereal travel
12	4	As 10-11, but a second group or creature approaches while the PCs are busy with any one encounter (DMs' choice)

Table E2: Ethereal Encounter Types

1d100	Can Recur?	Type of Creatures Encountered	Number Appearing	Encounter Range	Ref
01-04	No	Apparition	1	60'	C35
05-14	Yes	Blackball	1	30'	M40, I50
15-23	No	Fleet, merchant	1	320'	M41
24-32	No	Fleet, war	1	320'	M35
33-36	Yes	Party, diaboli	1	120'	M3, I37
37-52	Yes	Party, normal	1	120'	M3
53-64	Yes	Plasm, giant	2-8	120'	C42
65-70	No	Plasm, normal	2-20	60'	C42
71-74	No	Poltergeists	2-8	60'	C32
75-94	No	Snakemen	1-3	240'	I
95-00	No	Spectral hounds	2-12	120'	C36

Encounter Details (Astral or Ethereal)

Adaptors: AC 9; HD 8; MV 120' (40'); AT 2 swords or 1 blast; D 1-8/1-8 or paralysis; THAC0 12; Save F8; ML 10; Int 13; AL N; XP 1,200 each

These travelers are somewhat mercenary, but not evil. They are a scouting patrol for their nearby astral planet. They are equipped with wand-like objects that project a paralysis beam to a 240' range, but these objects are attuned to their owners' nervous systems, and do not function for anyone else. They all carry swords and are able to attack with them twice per round, but they rarely use them during general exploration.

Apparition: AC 0; HD 10***; MV 180' (60'); AT 2 claws; D 1d6+2 each; Save M10; THAC0 10; ML 10; Int 11; AL C; XP 3,250

This phantom appears nearly identical to a wight. It can create a swirling mist 10 feet high and 40 feet across, which lasts for up to 12 rounds. All within it must save vs. Spells or be entranced. A saving throw is required each round the victim remains within the mist. The apparition is immune to *charm*, *cold*, and damage from normal weapons. The apparition may save vs. Spell to resist clerical Turning, and if successful, the Turn is reflected; the creature producing the Turn effect must also save or be paralyzed for 2-12 rounds. "D" results are handled normally.

This creature is a mere nuisance, easily avoided or destroyed.

Blackball: SP Entropy; RK Celestial 1; PP 1,300; A-M 60%; AC 9; HD 11; MV 30' (10'); AT 1 touch; D Disintegrate; THAC0 10; ML 12; Int 0; AL None; XP 153,400 (15.3 PP)

This creature follows the Immortals if avoided, and must eventually be confronted. It uses all Power attacks as it tries to move in for melee. If it hits, the victim must save vs. Power Drain or lose 1/3 of his or her current Power Points. If this save is failed, another must be made immediately, with the same results; a third consecutive failure means that the victim is sucked through the blackball and cast adrift in the Dimensional Vortex, lost until rescued at a later time.

Draeden: SP Thought; RK Empyrean 4; PP 4,500; A-M 99%; AC -20; HD 150 (hp 1,000); MV 18 miles (6 miles); AT 40 bites; D 1-100 each; Save Emp 4; THAC0 -2; AL C; Int 100; XP 16,904,800 (1,690 PP)

This huge brute is over 28 miles long. It is cruising at top speed, but is in a relatively benign and playful mood. It swerves its course to head for the PCs. If they take immediate evasive action, via *astral teleport*, they can avoid it; otherwise it will catch up to them in 3 rounds. It takes only one bite at each character, waving its many other forward mouths around and chattering its teeth at

them. As it swiftly swoops by, it grins at them with all 20 of its rear mouths, and then leaves.

Dragons, brown: AC -6; HD 22 (140, 116); MV 150' (50'), flying 360' (120'); AT 1 bite/2 claws/1 kick/1 wing/1 tail; D 6d6+8 (bite)/4-16 each (x5); Save F36; THAC0 4; ML 10; Int 16; AL C; XP 18,500 (1.8 PP)

These two evil creatures are spell-users, and each has memorized several magic-user spells (five L1, five L2, five L3, four L4, three L5; DM's choice). One wears a medallion of *plane traveling*. The two are out scavenging. They seek easy prey, but have found little that is edible, and so are willing to take on humans if necessary to get something to eat. They will breathe as needed, and have a choice of using gas or fire. If the victim fails to save vs. the gas, he or she is transformed into gaseous form. A failure vs. the fire causes all items carried to burn or melt (magic items take 4 or more rounds to do so). The dragons flee if the fight goes against them, but their breath weapons and physical attacks are formidable, even to Immortals. The dragons are not familiar with astral travel, so they do not recognize the Immortals as such.

Dragons, gold: AC -6; HD 22 (hp 140, 116); MV 150' (50'), flying 360' (120'); AT 1 bite/2 claws/1 kick/1 wing/1 tail; D 6d6+8 (bite)/4-16 each (x5); Save F36; THAC0 4; ML 10; Int 17; AL L; XP 18,500 (1.8 PP)

These two good creatures are spell-users, and each has memorized several magic-user spells (five L1, five L2, five L3, four L4, three L5; DM's choice). One wears a medallion of *plane traveling*. They can choose between fire and gas breaths. The two are looking for two brown dragons that they have tracked into this plane, old enemies whom they know well. They anticipate a pitched battle if they find their prey, and would welcome aid from the PCs. They can offer nothing in exchange except their friendship, and a favor that the characters may name later.

Fleet, Merchant: A group of 12 flying saucers is seen approaching. Each is about 60 feet in diameter, shaped like a large lens, with bright flashing red and white lights and a few tubes emitting fire and a bit of smoke. The saucers are flying in a tight and uniform formation.

The saucers slow to a stop as they near the PCs. The characters may take any action they think appropriate during this procedure. If the saucers are attacked, they defend themselves (see following statistics).

If unmolested, the saucers stop very near to the PCs and a hatch opens atop one of them. A spidery being comes out, and reveals itself to be one of the race of planar spiders, the famed interplanar traders. This merchant fleet is en route (though they do not say to or from where), and seeks to collect items for trade. They offer gems and gold pieces in exchange. If disappointed with the prospects of trade with the PCs, they simply pack up and leave.

Flying saucers (12): A-M 90%; AC -15; HD 50 (hp 300); MV 360' (120'), or up to 24 miles (8 miles); AT 2 meteors/2 beams (all to 360' range); D 1d20 + 20 (impact) + 5-50 (fire)/paralysis (both x2); THAC0 5; XP 56,000 (PP 5.6) (Attacks as if HD 20.)

Planar spider (8 per disc): AC 6; HD 5** to 10**; MV 180' (60'); AT 1 bite; D 2-12 + poison; Save F5-10; THAC0 15 to 10; ML 9; Int 12 +; AL N; XP 425 to 2,500 (Ref: M41)

The material of the saucers blocks all Power attacks and probes. These vessels are specifically designed for interplanar exploration and normally cruise at relatively low speed unless fleeing or chasing. Their operators, the planar spiders, are neutral and relatively inoffensive. Four spiders at their stations within the disc can shift it across a planar boundary by concentration alone in 1 round.

The saucers are filled with various bits of equipment, treasure of all sorts (normal and magical), and odd technological items.

Fleet, War: The 12 flying saucers of this encounter appear identical to those of the merchant fleet (q.v.). However, they attack the PCs on sight. These vessels are operated by meks, huge metallic insectoid creations of a long-dead race. The meks follow their last instructions, to destroy humanoid life forms throughout the Ether.

The meks are immune to Power attacks, all forms of cold, and all spell effects except *disintegrate*, the latter having an effect as if a *slow* spell. A mek can release a gas in a 20' diameter cloud around it, which causes paralysis for 1-3 turns. A saving throw vs. Paralysis required each round the victim remains within the cloud.

Flying saucers (12): A-M 90%; AC -15; HD 50 (hp 300); MV 360' (120'), or up to 24 miles (8 miles); AT 2 meteors/2 beams (all to 360' range); D 1d20 + 20 (impact) + 5-50 (fire)/paralysis (both x2); THAC0

5; XP 56,000 (PP 5.6) (Attacks as if HD 20.)

Mek (2 per disc): AC -4; HD 11** to 16**; MV 90' (30'); AT 2 blows/1 breath; D 6-60 (x2)/paralysis; Save F36; THAC0 10 to 7; ML 12; Int n/a; AL C; XP 2,700 to 4,050 (Ref: M35)

Immortals (1-8): This group is from any one Sphere and any one Rank. They are traveling in standard form on general patrol. They may stop and talk with the PCs, but have no special news or objective. They mention that the storm is still brewing but predictably slowly.

Jumpers: SP Time; RK mortal; PP 100; A-M 100% or 0; AC -7/-2; HD 20; MV 450' (150'); AT 12 tentacles; D 2-12 + special (each); Save F = 20; THAC0 5; Int 22; AL N; XP 16,775 each (1.7 PP)

A jumper may use up to five attacks against a single opponent. In addition to damage, any Immortal hit loses 1-10 PP (temporary damage), and must save vs. Power Drain or be jumped ahead 5 rounds. For each jump it causes, the jumper is cured of 5 hp and 5 PP. Its body is AC -7 and its tentacles AC -2. It is 100% resistant to all magic except that of the Sphere of Time.

These scavenger thieves seek mortal prey, and may attack until they realize the PCs' status (which may be instantly deduced if characters produce magical effects without actual spellcasting). They apologize (telepathically) when they realize their error, and may agree to atone for their error by accompanying the party for a short distance. They do not leave the Astral Plane, nor do they seek employment at this time, as they have other commitments.

Nippers: AC 0; HD 1 (hp 1 each); MV 240' (80'); AT 1 swarm; D 1 + special; Save F1; THAC0 special; ML 11; Int 1; AL N; XP 50 each (1 PP)

These pests split into two swarms of equal size as they approach the party, and attack two randomly chosen victims. They can be easily destroyed until they arrive, a *fire ball* incinerating 21-30 of them. If allowed too close, however, they are extremely dangerous.

Each swarm's effective Hit roll is the same as the number of nippers in the swarm (using the attack chart for 1 HD creatures). If the attack succeeds, the number of nippers that hit is the difference between the victim's AC and the AC hit. For example, if 21 nippers (i.e. Hit roll of 21, hitting AC -6) attack a

victim with AC 0, then 6 nippers hit. Each such nipper inflicts 1 hp of damage and burrows in, producing 2-20 young in 1 round and 1-10 more for 5 rounds thereafter, each causing the same damage. For each nipper born, the victim must make a standard Constitution check or permanently lose 1-4 points from their Constitution. Each young reaches maturity 1 turn after birth, and immediately reproduces. Nippers can be destroyed by *fireballs*.

Party: These are typical adventurers, each of level 15-34 (1d20 + 14), who may (20% chance) be diaboli, or who are otherwise a typical group of humans and 1-2 demi-humans.

The DM should carefully create and equip the party beforehand, selecting spells and magic items appropriate to the character levels. At the time of this encounter, the mortal party may be somewhat depleted from previous encounters, lacking 0-70% (1d8-1x10) of their spells and hit points.

Refer to the general notes on NPC parties. If the mortal characters are randomly generated and not otherwise special, they may (35% chance) attack on sight. If so, they stop if given any good reason, such as when they realize the power of their opponents.

Plasms, normal: AC 0; HD 6*; MV 120' (40'); AT 2 claws; D 2-12 each; Save F6; THAC0 14; ML 9; Int 8; AL C; XP 500 each

Plasms, giant: AC -4; HD 12*; MV 120' (40'); AT 2 claws; D 3-18 each; Save F12; THAC0 9; ML 11; Int 9; AL C; XP 2,125 each

A plasm appears to be a skeleton made of one element (such as fire or stone). It is immune to poison and all normal weapon damage. A plasm struck by an Immortal blow only takes an amount of damage equal to the Strength score modifier (e.g. 4 points from a 20-strength blow). When struck by weapons, only the magical damage applies. To flee, a plasm "spends" 10 of its hit points to create an acidic cloud 30 feet in diameter (D 20, save vs. Breath for half) which remains for 1-6 rounds.

These monsters attack immediately. At least one plasm of the group is a fire plasm. Roll 1d4 to find the elemental type of each additional creature: 1 = air, 2 = earth, 3 = fire, 4 = water. Mixed groups are common.

If area-effect magic is used on these creatures, and if that effect could benefit any one or more of the plasms, the effect is absorbed by those recipients, and does not affect the

Appendix

others at all. Benefits from such effects are applied to each such plasm, not divided among them. The maximum possible size is 90 Hit Dice. Apply revised saving throws as Fighter level equal to the new Hit Dice. Award XP based on the largest size reached.

Example: Seeing a large group of giant-sized and obviously hostile skeletons approaching, one PC casts a 40-die fire ball at them. By the DM's random roll, two of these plasms are fire-type, so they absorb the magic before it can damage the other plasms. Each of the giant fire plasms instantly gains 40 Hit Dice (added to their original 12), and a number of added hit points equal to the damage which would have been inflicted by the fire ball.

As the Hit Dice of a plasm increases, so do the XP value, chance to hit, and damage from its claws, as follows:

Hit Dice	Damage per Claw (x2)	THAC0	XP Value
6	2-12	14	500
7 to 12	3-18	13 to 9	850-2,125
13 to 18	4-24	9 to 6	2,300-3,475
19 to 24	5-30	5 to 3	3,800-6,000
25 to 30	6-36	3 or 2	6,500-9,000
31 to 36	7-42	2 or 1	9,500-12,000
37 to 42	8-48	1 to 2*	12,500-15,000
43 to 48	9-54	2*	15,500-18,000
49 to 54	10-60	2*	18,500-21,000
55 to 60	11-66	2*	21,500-24,000
61 to 66	12-72	2*	24,500-27,000
67 to 72	13-78	2*	27,500-30,000
73 to 78	14-84	2*	30,500-33,000
79 to 84	15-90	2*	33,500-36,000
85 to 90	16-96	2*	36,500-39,000

* Bottom line of Hit roll chart (q.v.); vs. all AC to -1, damage bonus applies.

Poltergeists: AC -1; HD 12****; MV 60'(20'); AT 2 missiles; D 1-4 + aging; Save F12; THAC0 9; ML 11; Int 13; AL C; XP 4,750 each

Each of these haunts appears to be a cluster of tentacles with dozens of tiny eyes. It can make an ectoplasmic net in 3 rounds, which is the same as a magical web spell. It can also gaze to a 60' range, and the victim must save or be paralyzed for 2-8 rounds. It attacks by throwing small globs of hardened ectoplasm, for little damage plus an aging effect (which Immortals can freely ignore).

Poltergeists are harmed by +2 or better weapons, and may save vs. Spells to avoid being destroyed by a clerical Turn undead attempt.

These slow creatures are hostile but easily avoided or destroyed.

Protean, Astral: PP 900; A-M 90%; AC 0; HD 90 (hp 550); MV 2,700'(900'); AT 9 pseudopods; D 90 each; Save F36; THAC0 -2; ML 11; Int 3; AL N; XP 279,375 (27.9 PP)

This primitive amoeboid scavenger is 540 feet across, but less than 6 feet thick. Its Strength and Constitution are effectively 90 each, but it is immune to all other ability score attacks. It can use all types of Power attacks, but is prone to repeat a mode if it succeeds with it, changing only after it loses. It cannot produce magical effects. It retreats from serious danger if it recognizes it as such.

Snakemen: SP Any one; RK Empyrean 1; PP 6,000; A-M 50%; AC -5; HD 31 (hp 310); MV 360'(120'); AT 4 claws/1 bite; D 1d8 + 11 (x4)/2-20 + poison; Save Emp 1; THAC0 2; Int 51-60; AL L; XP Special

HD 10; MV 180'(60'); AT 1 envelop/1 magic; D special; Save T36; THAC0 10; ML 10; Int 15; AL N; XP 15,250 each (1.5 PP)

These beings appear as large dark spheres, 10 feet in diameter, and may be mistaken for blackballs. They are immune to all energy-type magic. They seek non-magical water, and approach the party to ask for some. They do not attack immediately, but threaten to do so unless they get water. If an Immortal of Time confronts them and reveals his or her status, however, they immediately withdraw their demands and beg forgiveness. They otherwise attack. Any hit envelops the victim, and the soo then drops its A-M and uses magical effects of the Sphere of Time (cause wounds, finger of death, etc.) as its attack mode.

Spectral hounds: AC -2; HD 10**; MV 150'(50'); AT 1 bite; D 4-24 + special; Save F10; THAC0 10; ML 12; Int 2; AL C; XP 2,500 each

These creatures track down the party and attack. They are immune to fire, cold, and normal weapons. In addition to damage, a bite requires the victim to save vs. Spell. Failure causes a dimensional shift, as the victim is forced across one dimensional boundary each 6 hours, finally being forced into the Dimensional Vortex after four shifts. The shifts affect both the physical form and the dimensional perspective.

Unlike the effect on mortals, an Immortal cannot stop the shifting effect by a simple dimension door spell. The assistance of one or more magic-using nightmare creatures (such as diabolical adventurers) is the only thing that can stop the shifts. If a diabolus casts a dimension door upon the victim, the shifts cease at that point. The victim can then regain his or her normal dimensional existence and perspective by the usual Power expenditure (50 PP per dimensional boundary crossed). If any character is affected, an Immortal diabolus passes by, rectifies the situation and explains what has happened.

Titan: SP Any except Entropy; RK Initiate; PP 250; A-M 25%; AC -3; HD 15 (hp 85 each); MV 150'(50'); AT 2 fists or 1 weapon/1 spell; D 4-24 each or 5-13/by spell; THAC0 8; Int 22; AL Any; XP 52,800 (5.28 PP)

These servants do not approach unless the party permits it. They use Power to probe from afar and immediately assume that the PCs are Immortals, their masters. They relay messages and serve as commanded, but mention that they are on an errand for a Celestial of their Sphere, and cannot tarry long.

Soo: SP Time; PP 100; A-M 50%; AC -5;



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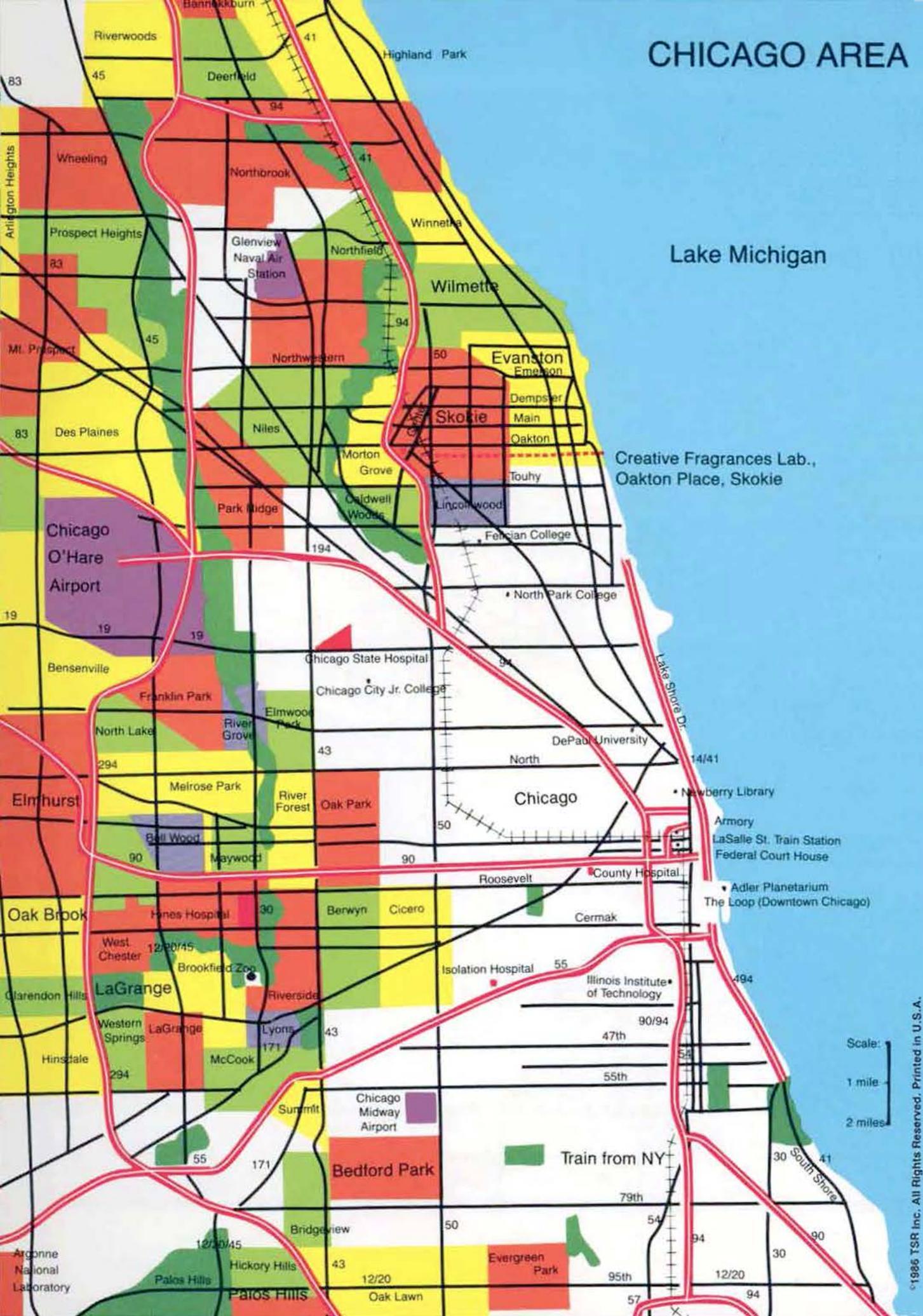
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STREETS	PARKS	IRT SUBWAY	IND SUBWAY
WATER	RAILROAD	BMT SUBWAY	POINTS OF INTEREST

ONE MILE

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CHICAGO AREA





Immortal Game Adventure

The Immortal Storm

by Frank Mentzer

“The storm-stuff is not matter as we know it, and beyond Immortal control,” the Hierarchy sighs. “I fear we are doomed.”

It appeared only a few weeks ago—a swirling gray mass of incalculable size. And in its center, an eye. A humanoid eye. Now the storm threatens the very era of Immortal rule.

The growing maelstrom emits a message to the Hierarchs. But what does it mean? Can it help save this realm of existence? Is there *time* to save this realm?

This first Immortal adventure pits your party against the multiverse in a desperate struggle to find the essence of life. This adventure is nothing like you’ve ever played before.

This adventure is for use with the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules, and cannot be played without the D&D® Basic, Expert, Companion, Masters, and Immortal rules produced by TSR, Inc.

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P.O. Box 756
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WI 53147

TSR UK Ltd.
The Mill, Rathmore Road
Cambridge CB1 4AD
United Kingdom

ISBN 0-88038-313-5

