

Playing the Game

A 0th Level Funnel



Perry Fehr

COMPATIBLE WITH
**DCC
RPG**

PLAYING THE GAME

by Perry Fehr

An unorthodox 0-level funnel for the Dungeon Crawl Classics game. Though any number of 0-level characters can enter and seek The Center (and level 1), it is suggested that 16-20 do so at any given time, each player creating 4, 0-level characters each as described in the

Dungeon Crawl Classics Role-Playing Game.

By Perry Fehr • **Cover Design by** Gary Dupuis • **Game Board by** Gary Dupuis • **Editing by** Mark Gedak, Perry Fehr • **Interior Art by** Gary Dupuis, Jacob Blackmon

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All products in the Adventure Locale line present one or more dungeons that can be quickly picked up and used for a session of the Dungeon Crawl Classics Role Playing Game.

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Introduction

Having grown to enjoy DCC in the year since I came to know of the entertaining retro RPG, I have had the pleasure of editing quite a few written adventures for Purple Duck Games, and have played a few funnels myself. The mechanic is quite unique and refreshing, and results in characters you actually feel protective of, like they were your own alter-egos.

At the same time, I took the opportunity to meld some of the concepts I have been developing for PDG's 'Lands of Porphyra' campaign setting, and one of my favorites so far is the game of ARBAKAMPSI, played by the defeated Elementalist desert nomads of the southern

deserts of Siwath, Simoon and Ghadab. I think in-game competition is fun and diverting, and that mental puzzles are essential to the role-playing hobby. I hope this funnel intrigues you- if you like it, drop PDG a line and the may be more adventures focusing on Elementalism and the fractious relationships of the Four and the other demons, deities, and higher beings of Dungeon Crawl Classics.

Thanks to Joseph Goodman of Goodman Games for a lot of inspiration re: Ithha, Grom and other creatures, and to Mark at PDG for publishing my stuff and dangling interesting projects before my nose.

Enjoy.

Background

The Royal Court of Elementals is unlike any other pantheon of deities, cabal of ascended wizards, or coven of demons begotten to the universe- they are the metaphysical embodiment of the four divisions of matter and energy themselves. As such, many claim The Four are above the petty squabbling of gods and demons, independent of worship by petty mortals, and as powerful as hurricanes, planets, suns, and the vast oceans of all worlds, everywhere. The latter statement is likely true, but The Four have become as prone to the need for adoration and dominance as any mortal. Cults and sects in many cultures have arisen around one or a combination of The Four, as allegiances and antagonisms rise and fade between them.

Probably the most powerful, notable, and secretive group are the Zendik Order, a cadre of wizards who contemplate the totality of The Four, seeking to focus their assembled power for their own use, and the use of those who would keep a Zendik as their trusted adviser, or vizier. The distant deserts are the origin of the Zendik Order, crucibles of howling windstorms, endless sand, burning sun and life-giving oases, and the members of the Zendik Order are mostly of that land. A harsh land produces rugged people, and only the skillful survive, but what it doesn't produce is large numbers of cannon fodder- er, loyal troops. The Zendik Order has decreed in its secret councils that they will begin a program of recruitment among the infidels of other lands that will both winnow out the weak and the slow and enforce a loyalty to The Four that will be enduring.

To this end, Zendik Order agents have traveled far and

wide, with sorcerous versions of the desert pastime “The Game of Five Rings”- called *arbakampsi* in the language of the desert nomads. The game, once engaged to a certain point, draws the ‘recruit’ in and stores them in Limbo until such time as a significant amount are collected, and put through an appropriate trial of attrition and testing, eliminating the weak and instructing survivors in the lessons of The Four. The power of the Zendik Order is such that the ‘Winners’ will be granted an audience with semi-engaged avatars of The Four, who will bond their will with the survivors, whether they like it or not.

Adventure Start

Each peasant, neophyte, or brash amateur among you experiences the same evening of entertainment, on one dull night in your village or community; a stranger, with a playing board, knucklebone and colorful pieces challenges you to a friendly game, one from his far-off homeland. He introduces himself as Wazir, and seems friendly enough. He wears a strange headcloth and voluminous robes, and speaks with a rough, foreign accent- but he buys a round of drinks and invites you to sit, saying:

‘In my land we play the Game of Five Rings to entertain ourselves during the sandstorms- would you like to play? We wager for stakes, as you do in your amusements. See- I place a gold coin here, in the Center (which is the Center of the World) and, since it is the game of... my people, you must only place a copper piece of your own. Should you win, you increase your money hundredfold!’

If the character wishes to keep his copper and leave, that character is out of the funnel! At this point, the judge can either demonstrate the play of The Game or give a copy of the rules to the player, to briefly peruse. The Map/Game is placed before the players, or a Map/Game for each player, with the judge playing all players simultaneously- or perhaps have the players play together as one, with all games for all ‘characters’ coming out the same way; however the play situation demands or desires. At some point, when a game is won, perhaps, or when a player achieves a ‘battle’ that intersects all four Rings, Wazir will look up and say...

“So. The game shall now, truly, begin...”

And each character, no matter where they are, vanishes in a flash of light with their starting goods, and appears with all of the other ‘recruits’ in the First Ring, starting below. All hexes/game spaces are 10 ft. across with regards to movement and any other effects.

First Ring - Ring of Water

In a flash of light, you find yourself standing knee-deep (or thigh, or waist deep for dwarves and halflings) in deep blue water. Actually, the floor and outer wall of the place you are in is blue, and the inner wall is red. You see sparkling stars above, giving faint light; the walls are slick stone and seem to be set in regular angles, turning out of your sight.

On the game-master’s map, place the characters with a d24, from whatever point you wish to start. This will likely separate many characters from seeing each other! The first player that voices the observation that they are in some kind of embodiment of the game they were playing receives a bonus Luck point immediately. The Judge may then place the game board down for the players to use miniatures, or what have you.

Players can then voice what they are going to do; if they try something not described here, the Judge will have to wing it!

Search the floor of the hallway: The water is somewhat murky, but not dirty, and a successful DC 10 Intelligence check on d20 will find a large pliable disc on the floor, with a recessed handle- there are as many as there are characters. Pulling it causes the water to drain away, reducing the power of the Seasnakes (below). A character can pull a plug in the same round as he looks for it, but must take a round to do that action. The water will drain away in as many rounds as there are characters, reduced by 1 round for every plug pulled, though a channel of water will remain in the drop-off around the outer wall. Plugs can be used as a odd sort of shield, if the character tries to use it as such- though it will be destroyed if an enemy inflicts a critical hit.

Search the inner wall: Presumably looking for a way forward, a DC 10 Intelligence check will find a recess the size of a large coin; there is one on every other wall, 24 in total. Placing a copper, silver or gold coin will seal that particular recess permanently, sticking something else in will break a magical seal and cause water to pour

in, until a 'coin eye' from a Seasnake is place in it. A coin eye, placed in a wall recess, will cause a portal to suck the coin-placer into the next Ring. The recess will then disappear.

Search the outer wall: Presumably looking for escape, there is a drop-off right before the outer wall, and any player searching it must make a DC 15 Agility check or trip and get dunked, ruining their action; as they spit out the water, it grows into an elemental, four-eyed Seasnake! It appears as a snake made out of roiling water, with golden coins for eyes, recoverable when slain. The statistics are given for "with water/without" if the Ring has been drained.

Swim: The swimmer will automatically see the plugs, but must make a DC 8 Stamina check or swallow some water, creating a Seasnake when they surface.

Seasnake: Init +1/-1; Atk bite +2/+0 melee (1d6/1d3); AC 14/10; HD 2d6/1d6; MV 20'; Act 1d20; SP ½ strength when not in water; Fort +6 Ref +3 Will +2; AL N.

Solving the Ring: There is no way to progress unless Seasnakes are created, and even if the Ring is drained, characters may have to ingest and spit out water from the channel to get more. It is also possible that the Ring may fill up with water, drowning all the players, or summoning enough Seasnakes to kill them all... the Judge will just have to shake his head and have Wazir try another tavern, with hopefully brighter prospects. All those that are sucked into portals will arrive simultaneously in the next ring, regardless of when they placed their coin eye portal keys.

Second Ring - Ring of Fire

In another flash of light, you appear in a hallway similar to the one you just left- though somewhat smaller and quite opposite... It is hot in here, there is an enclosed ceiling now. The outer wall is red- red-hot, it would seem, and the inner wall is yellow. If you do not do something quick, the heat will finish you!

[Place two 'barriers' such as dice or a miniature at the top and bottom of the fire ring.]

The survivors should be placed according to a roll of



A Seasnake

d16, after placing two barriers described to players as "wide, heat-emanating brass pillars" at the north and south apexes of the game board hexagon (if they have figured that out yet). Thus there is a good chance that the survivors will be separated. If someone from both sides are near a pillar, they can hear one another, and perhaps glimpse through the narrow crack, though that proximity would always require a DC 12 Fortitude save or take 1d2 points of heat damage. Hanging on each outer wall, at 90 degrees to the barriers, are large brass keys (actually half a key, lengthwise) on each side; merging the key halves opens a door in the inner wall, easily passed by everyone. The key-half is red hot, touching it is 1d4 heat damage, DC 10 Fort save for half.

As before, each character can state what they are going to do, but do not resolve their action until all are stated, using the judge's best judgment if they are not stated here, keeping in mind the automatic damage done per round for taking actions; 50% chance of taking 1d3 heat damage per round, DC 10 save for half- half of 1 being 0 in this case.

Joining the key-halves: Retrieving a key-half can be done without damage is precautions are taken. Applying a liquid to it will visibly cool it, causing a key-half to do only 1 point of heat damage, DC 10 Fort save for none, and grasping it with heavy cloth or leather will do

the same. If both halves are retrieved, one can be tossed through the gap between the pillar and the wall (Hit AC 12 ranged or it drops to the floor, and retrieving it will invite damage). As stated above, the intact key opens a portal in the inner wall, passable by all in that half of the ring... if there are characters in the other side that threw the key-piece through, they will perish if they cannot reach the portal.

Search the inner or outer walls, floor, ceiling: The key-half of that side will be located, obviously, on the outer wall, though it does not have to be searched for if any character materializes within 10' of it. The inner wall, ceiling and floor yields no clues, seemingly being made of metal, but faint tracings of simple runes of Air, Earth, Fire and Water can be found upon them. Those that insist on searching the hallway surfaces take 1d3 points of heat damage, DC 10 Fort save for half damage.

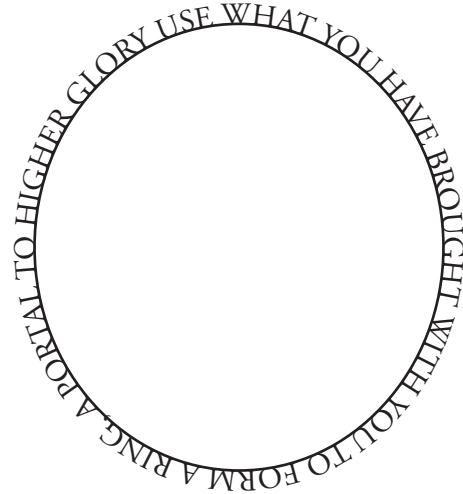
Interact with the pillars: These 'heat-emanating pillars' are conduits from the Plane of Fire, and heat this Ring to almost unbearable temperatures. They can be 'shut off', however, but splashing them with liquid of any type- water from the last Ring, blood (1 hp worth) even (ahem) urine... Some trade goods would work as well, at the judge's discretion. If deactivated, the pillar will shrink into a brass baton that acts as a +1 club, usable by any class. Note that doing something ineffective to the pillars does 1d3 points of heat damage, DC 11 Fort save for half damage. One pillar 'shut off' reduces damage 1 place on the dice chain, and increases saves by +2. If both are gone, the Ring will cool off- but do the same damage every minute instead of every round.

Solving the Ring: 'Shutting off' the heat-pillars is probably a good use of time, and also gives a chance to characters on both sides of the Ring, if they can survive figuring out how it works. Remember that the key only opens one door, and once it passes through, it closes. It may be possible to leave the key behind, if that helps.

Third Ring - Ring of Air

A flash of light, and you find yourself standing on nothing, with nothing above, and seemingly, nothing below! In front of you is a rough wall of stone and earth, with a series of words, in a ring [show fig. 2 for a "one one-thousand" count] Then, you are falling, tumbling a little, seeing a red, metallic wall behind you, falling, falling...

The survivors all materialize at the same time, as before, in a Ring that has a red outer wall and a brown inner wall- there is no ceiling or floor! Light seems to radiate from everywhere. They see a phrase written in runes on the inner wall, in a circular pattern- the Judge will show them figure 2 for A SECOND and then they will drop away from it, seeing the rough face of the inner wall rushing past them.



As before, each character can state what they are going to do, but do not resolve their action until all are stated, using the judge's best judgment if they are not stated here:

Make contact with the inner wall: The inner wall is rough and irregular-if they touch it with an object, they will lose it unless they make a DC 15 Reflex save. If they touch it with their body, they must make the same save or take 1d4 damage, and go spinning wildly, requiring another DC 15 save or slam into the outer wall- the judge can move them up to 40' away from the group. If the Judge wishes, chunks of stone could be gleaned from the inner wall, usable as ammunition or weapons of a sort- there is even a 1 in 14 chance that a chunk taken contains 1d24 gp worth of valuable ore.

Make contact with the outer wall: It still radiates heat, but not enough to harm. Contact requires a DC 15 Reflex save or be moved 1d5x10 feet away from their position.

Observe the environment: Specks can be seen, apparently far away, but getting closer, those individuals get a +1 initiative bonus when the Windpigs attack...

Attempt to 'fly': Movement is a function of willpower here in the Air Ring- merely stating "I flap my arms," will do nothing, but "I try to fly somewhere" will enable a d16 Personality check, which, if successful, enables

the 'flyer' to move their land speed per round. The only identifiable feature in the entire Ring is the rune-clue, which the Judge can assign an arbitrary distance to reach: from d5 to d14 rounds is a good distance, less rounds spent fighting, if any.

Do nothing: Indecision, or "seeing what happens" will skip the action to the next event, which is the arrival of denizens of this elemental space. They appear as sky-blue pig-like creatures, with no visible wings of any kind, clamp-like appendages, and prehensile, barbed tongues. They are Windpigs, and are capable of latching onto the inner wall if they so choose. They arrive in flocks of 1d4+1, in a randomly determined space using d12 from the top space, and a new flock will arrive in 1d6+1 rounds after the first does.

Windpigs: Init +0; Atk bite +1 melee (1d4) or 2 claws +0 melee (1d3); AC 12; HD 1d6; MV fly 30'; Act 1d20; SP clamp on; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +1; AL N. If both claws hit, the Windpig has clamped on to prey and gets +2 to its next bite attack, to hit and damage.

Solving the Ring: By reaching the ring of runes, characters may get an idea of how to leave the Air Ring. They must form a circle of some sort big with their bodies- even making a circle with finger and thumb will make a portal to the next Ring, albeit too small to use! The portal formed will remain for one round after it is made, so as to be entered by the makers. Best practice would be for all survivors to join hands and make a ring- the portal formed allows as many people through as were part of its making, though even one person could make a ring for their own sole use.

Fourth Ring – Ring of Earth

A flash of light, and you find yourself confined in a pitch-black space- and it seems only to be three feet high! The surface you are on seems to pebble-spotted earth, and you hear a grinding, crumbling sound from somewhere... and within that sound you hear the words, "BE ONE".

The survivors all materialize at the same time, as before, in a ring with a yellow outer wall, and an inner wall that varies between gold and silver. The space they enter is three feet tall; humans and elves appear on their bellies, though dwarves may crouch and halflings may stoop a

little, acting normally. A crawling character moves 10', though creative arrangements may impress the judge enough to forgo this. The ring consists of 6 spaces, and the survivors are scattered randomly through this, on top of one another, if necessary.

Each turn, one of the six sections will randomly collapse into the abyss, and the previously collapsed one will 'fill in'. A consecutive roll means that nothing collapses. Being present on a collapsing section requires a DC 15 Reflex to jump, or plunge into the terrible Abyss... There are few options, but some are presented below:

Climb into a collapsed section: The character attempting it must make a DC 10 Strength check each round, to cling to the wall and/or move. There is nowhere to go, but if the section fills in, it is the same as burying themselves, should they survive it...

Examine the inner or outer walls: Accomplishes nothing, though listening at the inner wall may yield a sound like the four elements, rushing together.

Solving the Ring: Passing the level requires the survivors to dig themselves and be buried completely below the surface of their section; when that section collapses, they will be transported to the final "Center". Chunks of stone for weapons (or possible treasure, 1 in 14 chance, see Third Ring above) Once buried, they can hold their breath with a successful Stamina check- otherwise they take a point of Stamina damage, each round until the section collapses!

The Center Ring

The blinding light persists longer now, and you find yourself standing on a hexagonal surface of polished alabaster, seemingly floating in the star-spangled backdrop of the night sky. Four figures sit on thrones before you, thrones of cloud, fire, ice and stone. The figures are hazy as though through a glass, but figures appearing as follows: a conglomeration of dust-laden whirlwinds, like a semi-humanoid starfish, with glaring eyes like lightning; A handsome red-skinned being with eyes of boiling lava and robes of molten gold; a blue-skinned maiden of mist, barely visible behind her steamy veil, and a lumpish brute of earth, mud and stone, cold pits for eyes. Their voices are in unison, the sound of storm and earthquake, wave and conflagration, and they ask:

“ARE YOU WORTHY?” The answer had better be yes...

Given a satisfactory answer, the enthroned beings will ask a series of questions to choose their would-be champions. If an answer is given incorrectly, an elemental extra-dimensional analogue of the (incorrect) type the answerer said will appear and attack! Helping the victim by attacking his analogue will result in the helpers being attacked by their own analogues. Once a character has been chosen by a patron, they may not “help” the others- they have been whisked away...Choose the questions by rolling d4, then d3, and d2.

Elemental extradimensional analogue: [identical stats to victim, plus: each successful attack on the analogue destroys the weapon it was struck with (unless it was magical), and its own analogue weapon does +1 damage. If killed, the analogue and all its possessions disappears. See page 413 of the core rulebook]

1. “WHICH OF US CAN BE HELD IN A HOUSE, BUT NOT IN A BOWL?”-The answer is AIR; whoever speaks such has Ithha, Prince of Elemental Wind as a patron, gaining +1 to hit with bows and slings, as well as the magical matrix for spellcasters.

2. “WHICH OF US IS LIFE FOR THE COLD ARMORED ONE?” -The answer is WATER; whoever speaks such has Splaasha, Princess of Elemental Water as a patron, gaining +2 to any Swimming skill attempts (and the knowledge of how to swim, if necessary) as well as the magical matrix for spellcasters.

3. “I ASSISTED ALL THE FIRST MEN, AND I WILL PAY THEM BACK AGAIN” - The answer is FIRE; whoever speaks such has Krakaal, Prince of Elemental Flame as a patron, gaining resistance to fire that allows one to ignore the first 2 points of fire damage, as well as the magical matrix for spellcasters.

4. “LIFE SPRINGS FROM ME, AND DEAD I TAKE YOU IN” - The answer is EARTH; whoever speaks such has Grom, Prince of Elemental Stone as a patron, gaining a permanent +1 bonus to armor class, as well as the magical matrix for spellcasters.

When all the Elemental Royalty has been taken as patrons or there are no more survivors, the Four ask those who are champions (if any) where they would like to go,

anywhere in the multiverse. They achieve 1st level at this point, and are gifted a shower of gold (actually, their Level 1 starting gold) with a modifier of +3 coins. Since they have passed five encounters, at 2 XP per encounter, they are officially Level 1 characters; they also gain a Luck point, to start them on their careers of adventure!

Elemental Lords as Patrons

Those that survive ‘Playing the Game’ have likely garnered the patronage of one of the Elemental Royalty, primal beings that have considerable influence over the Material Plane and squabble with each other and other deities over control of adherents and spheres of influence. Ithha, Prince of Elemental Winds is described on p 356 of the core rulebook, which also mentions Grom, Prince of Elemental Stone. Below are Invoke Patron results and background for the rest of the Elemental Pantheon:

Grom, Prince of Elemental Stone

Grom, prince of elemental stone, is another of the elemental pacts that can be made to secure magical power. Grom is a demigod who seeks to subjugate the wind elemental Ithha and his minions. Grom grants limited control over earth and stone and the ability to summon earth elementals.

Invoke Patron check results:

12-13	Wind-enemy. For the next turn, the caster and all allies within 10’ gain a +2 bonus to attacks, damage, and spell checks against creatures of air, or that fly.
14-17	Armor of stone. The caster is covered with a skin of flexible stone that adheres to their flesh that causes melee weapons to often bounce off the hard surface. For the next turn, all melee attacks that “hit” the caster have an automatic 50% chance of bouncing off, and the caster receives a +2 bonus to AC.
18-19	Earth-master. The caster can create an effect identical to the spell cause earthquake, but if creatures of the air are engaged, creates an effect whereby those that fly lose that power for the next turn, taking 1d5 damage per caster level if they have to make a forced landing.

20-23	Premature burial. The caster targets one creature standing on an earthen or stone surface within 100' and points to him. They are swallowed up by the earth unless they make a Reflex saving throw. Should they fail, they take 1d8 crushing damage, and have to dig themselves out, taking 1d4 rounds. Each round they take a dice step (down) of crushing damage, and 1d3 Stamina damage.
24-27	Elemental transformation. The caster and all his equipment become as the earth they stand on, and may pass through earth and unworked stone as a fish passes through water, without leaving a trace, though at a speed 10 feet slower than normal. The transformation lasts for 1 hour or until he wills it to end.
28-29	Summon iron shadow. This ferrous body-guard will serve the caster for 1 day, and has the same statistics as the creature of the same name on page 419 of the core rulebook.

30-31	Summon elemental. The caster calls forth a pillar of sentient stone. It appears immediately and obeys commands for 2d6 rounds, then departs. It has the stats and abilities of 8 HD earth elemental (see core rulebook page 411).
32+	Summon multiple elementals. The caster calls forth two pillars of sentient stone. They appear immediately and obey commands for 2d6 rounds, then depart. They have the stats and abilities of 12 HD earth elementals (see core rulebook page 411).

Splaasha, Princess of Elemental Water

Splaasha, princess of elemental water, weeps eternally for her lost love, the fire-prince Krakaal, but is another of the elemental pacts that can be made to secure magical power. She hates the demon prince Azi Dahaka above all for separating her from her prince, and grants limited control over water and the ability to summon water elementals.

Invoke Patron check results:

12-13	Sand-enemy. For the next turn, the caster and all allies within 10' gain +2 to attacks, damage, and spell checks against cold-blooded creatures, such as scorpions and snakes.
14-17	Absorbing shield. The caster is surrounded by a gurgling vortex of water that absorbs spells and area attacks such as breath weapons, swallowing and diluting them, and slowing physical attacks. For the next turn, all spell and area attacks that "hit" the caster have an automatic 50% chance of having no effect, and the caster receives +2 bonus to AC.
18-19	Ice-storm. A swirling, freezing cone of ice pellets emanates from the caster's fingertip, striking and coating one enemy targeted within 50'. The ice coating does one point of Agility damage automatically, and 1d10 damage upon failing a DC 20 Fort save. The cone continues to whirl around the target, doing 1d8 damage on the second round, 1d6, 1d4, and 1d3 on the fifth and final round. Each round, the target can make a DC 20 Fort save to avoid damage.



20-23	Drowning strike. The caster targets one air-breathing creature within 100' and points to him. They are immediately enveloped in a large globule of water. The creature begins drowning, taking 1d6 Stamina damage immediately unless he succeeds on a DC 20 Reflex save. If the save is failed, the target takes another 1d6 Stamina damage on the following round, with another save to resist. Each time the target fails a save, the drowning continues another round, lasting he succeeds on a save or until he reaches 0 Stamina, at which point he dies. This has the opposite effect on water-breathing creatures, causing them to be surrounded by air, with the same drowning effect.
24-27	Elemental transformation. The caster and all of his equipment become as fluid as water, allowing the caster to swim in water at twice his movement speed and breathe it normally. He may also pass through any crack or hole, so no door is a barrier to him. The transformation lasts for 1 hour or until he wills it to end.
28-29	Summon scrag-troll. This fearsome sea-troll will serve the caster for 1 day and has statistics identical to the troll, with described variations, on page 429 of the core rulebook.
30-31	Summon elemental. The caster calls forth a wave of self-willed water. It appears immediately and obeys commands for 2d6 rounds, then departs. It has the stats and abilities of 8 HD water elemental (see core rulebook page 411).
32+	Summon multiple elementals. The caster calls forth two waves of self-willed water. They appear immediately and obey commands for 2d6 rounds, then depart. They have the stats and abilities of 12 HD water elementals (see core rulebook page 411).

Krakaal, Prince of Elemental Flame

Krakaal, prince of elemental fire, broods eternally for his lost love, the water-princess Splaasha, but is ever allied to his master, Azi Dahaka, who promised aid against his nemesis, Yddgrl. He is another of the elemental pacts that can be made to secure magical power, and grants limited control over fire, and the ability to summon fire elementals.

Invoke Patron check results:

12-13	Wood enemy. For the next turn, the caster and all allies within 10' gain +2 to attacks, damage, and spell checks against creatures of the forest such as dryads, faeries, and tree-men.
14-17	Fire-shield. The caster is surrounded by a furious layer of fire that burns up missile attacks and hurts those that would strike the caster with melee attacks. For the next turn, all missile attacks that "hit" the user have an automatic 40% chance of being destroyed before doing damage, and any being that strikes the caster in melee combat, hit or miss, takes 1d7 fire damage.
18-19	Firestorm. A globe of fire shoots from the caster's fingertip, targeting one enemy within 50', who takes 1d14 points of damage, the globe surrounds and follows the target, getting smaller, doing 1d10 on the next round, 1d6 on the next round, and 1d3 on the fourth and final round. Each round, the target can make a DC 20 Fort save to avoid damage.
20-23	Firefall. The caster targets one creature within 100' and points to him. They are immediately enveloped in a large globule of water. The creature begins drowning, taking 1d6 Stamina damage immediately unless he succeeds on a DC 20 Reflex save. If the save is failed, the target takes another 1d6 Stamina damage on the following round, with another save to resist. Each time the target fails a save, the drowning continues another round, lasting he succeeds on a save or until he reaches 0 Stamina, at which point he dies. This has the opposite effect on water-breathing creatures, causing them to be surrounded by air, with the same drowning effect.
24-27	Elemental transformation. The caster and all of his equipment become as a being composed of smoke. He can fly at his movement speed and is immune to attack from mundane weapons, though he can be harmed by spells and magical attacks. While in smoke form, the caster cannot attack physically, but can cast spells that do not have limitations associated with his new form.

28-29	Summon Type I demon. This servant of Azi Dahaka is a Hell Viper, will serve the caster for 1 day, and has the following statistics: Init +0; Atk bite +6 melee (1d8+2); AC 13; HD 4d12; MV 30' or climb 20'; Act 1d20; SP demon traits (page 401 core rulebook), poison DC 16 Fort save [blindness, can only be healed by magic]; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +1; AL C.
30-31	Summon elemental. The caster calls forth a cascade of intelligent fire. It appears immediately and obeys commands for 2d6 rounds, then departs. It has the stats and abilities of 8 HD fire elemental (see core rulebook page 411).
32+	Summon multiple elementals. The caster calls forth cascades of intelligent fire. They appear immediately and obey commands for 2d6 rounds, then depart. They have the stats and abilities of 12 HD fire elementals (see core rulebook page 411).

Spellburn: The Elemental Lords

The Elemental Lords readily lend their strength to their champions, but few mortals can hold the attention of these primal entities for long. Those that do hope to show that they are composed of far more than mortal stuff, and are fit to serve the Four that claim to make up the substance of the Universe... Roll d5 and apply the “appropriate element” of the Lord in question if needed.

Roll Spellburn Result

1-2	A visible quantity of the appropriate element seems to slam into the body of the caster, from a nearby source, or from nowhere at all. As the spellburn takes effect, the element shoots from the caster's body into nothingness again, manifesting as spellburn loss.
3	The caster must sacrifice a prized possession to their appropriate element before the spellburn points can be recovered; burying, burning, dropping from a height, or tossing into deep water.
4	The elemental lord wishes to test their protégé; the caster takes 1 point per spell level in appropriate physical element damage per spell level cast, as well as spellburn damage.

5	The elemental lords are a jealous lot, and demand a boon in return, after granting spellburn points. The caster must slay a beast or servant of the opposing element (air and earth) or carry a message to a higher servant of water or fire (from the opposing element).
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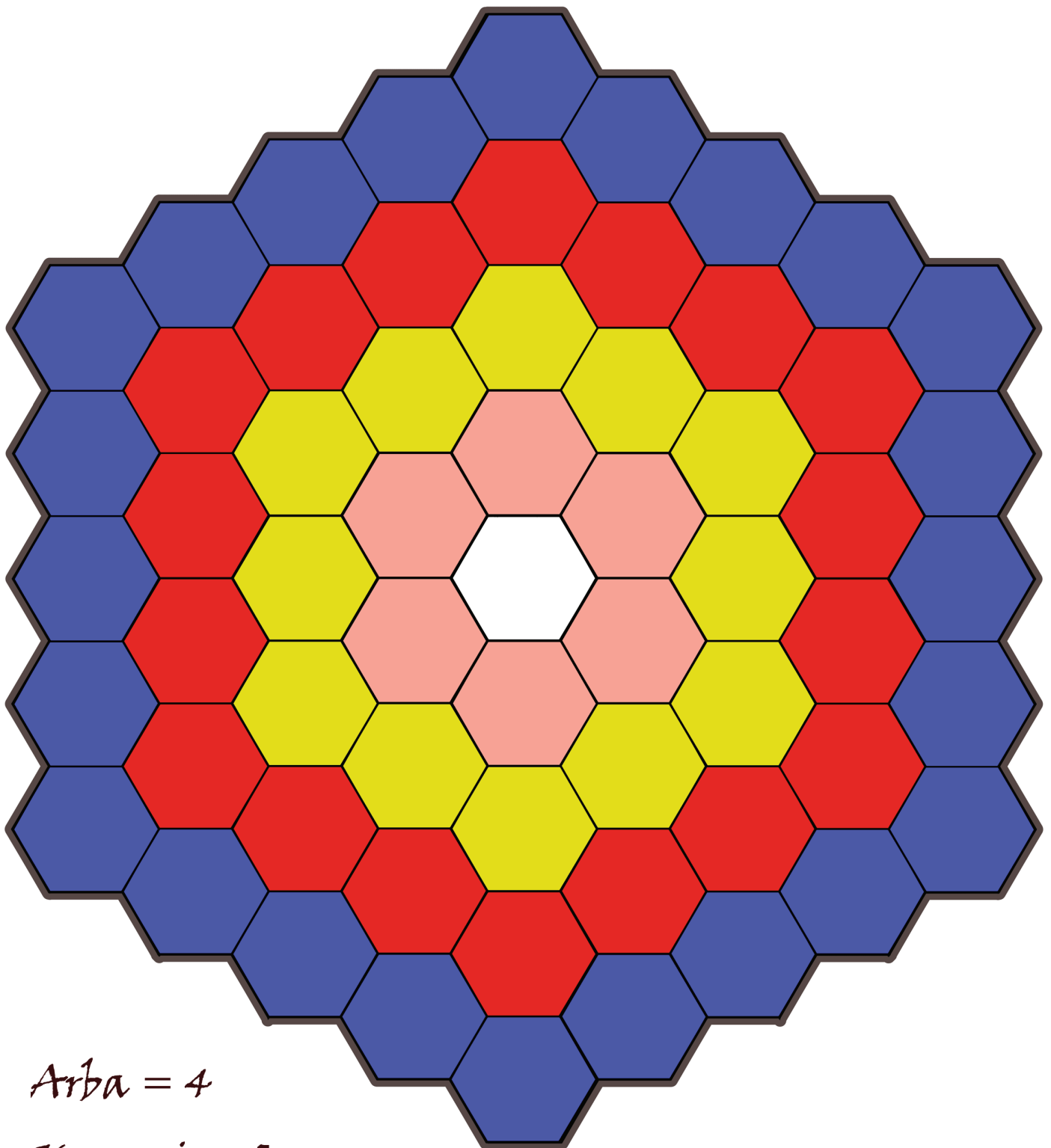
OTHER USES FOR THIS ADVENTURE

This adventure is intended as a “funnel” for 0-level characters, but could also be used as part of a larger adventure location for higher level characters. Increasing Hit Dice for Seasnakes and Windpigs, increasing the DC of saving throws, ability and skill checks, can all make this adventure viable for higher level characters, who find themselves “Playing the Game”. Monsters such as Hell Hounds (page 417) for the Second Ring and a Primeval Slime (page 423) for the Fourth Ring can make things interesting, as well. Treasure can also be scattered around if required, submerged in the water of the First Ring, imbedded in the earthen wall of the Second Ring, red-hot and dealing damage in the Third Ring, or buried in the ground in the Fourth Ring. A rough equivalent of 5d20 gp value per level per character should suffice to please greedy adventurers. The final opponent can be whatever boss the judge desires, access to the rest of the dungeon, or simple freedom; as a final opponent, it may be suggested that creatures summoned by a result of 28-29 on the Invoke Patron tables in Appendix A greet the players- but all in keeping with the appropriate level of the adventurers.

Here are some possible places to use the five rings of “Playing the Game”:

- An artifact has been secreted at the center of The Game, and the doorway (to the First Ring) is hidden in an ancient ruin.
- The Game is a construct all in the mind of a sage or seer seeking to test the adventurers, and any ‘death’ is only temporary, until after The Game is concluded.
- The Game is an execution method for a magical, barbaric culture, and reaching the Center is freedom for the accused adventurers.
- A god (other than The Four) maintains the alternate dimensions of The Game to protect certain secrets it possesses, that have to be hidden even from its own faithful.

Arbakampsi



Arba = 4

Kampsi = 5

Tawba = Retreat

Rules to “The Game of Five Rings”

Feel free to photocopy this rules sheet and give it to the players at the start of the session.

This game is a significant part of those that revere the Elemental Lords as patrons and gods. The game is part gambling, part strategy, and for the desert people, often the grounds for philosophical discussion over the painted wooden boards, dried beans, and camel’s knucklebone that serves as the components for a “Five Rings” set.

Components:

- 1 Game-board, with 64 spaces in four colors
- 2 sets of thirty tokens, of two different colors
- 1 six-sided die

Object: The object of the game is to gather tokens to place on the board, forming lines of four and claiming “borders”.

The Place of The Prize: No one shall place a token on the center space. This is the space whereupon all wagers shall be placed. The starting wager shall be one coin, according to one’s standing. The hosting player shall have the privilege of increasing the wager, whereupon the guest shall match it or forfeit. He may do this up to four times.

Procedure of Play: Either by dice or one player granting it so, the first player shall say the name of a number; One, Two, Three, Four, or Five. The die shall be rolled, and if the number rolled is equal to the name number or lower, the player shall place a number of tokens equal to Six, minus the number called. If the number rolled is higher than the number called, the player shall lose his turn, and his opponent shall remove one of his tokens from the board.

Retreat: Either player may elect to cease their turn, passing the die to the other, to avoid having to lose a token on the board. They shall signify by uttering, “Retreat” and passing the die.

Ending the Game: The game shall end when all 64 spaces are covered with tokens. It is only then that all points shall be tallied.

Scoring: A direct line of four tokens in a row is called a “Battle” and shall be worth one point. Having a majority of one’s tokens in a colored ring is called a “Border” and shall be worth two points. Ties grant no points. Completely covering a colored ring with one’s tokens is called a “Victory” and shall be worth two points.

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