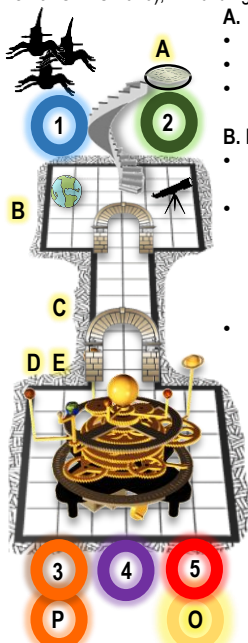


The Acient Orrery by Ed Nicholson. For mid level adventures. After discovering an ancient magical machine that manipulates space and time, and accidentally powering it up, the PCs need the copies of themselves they created to help them return from the moon and stop the invading Spider Lizards.

Start: PCs uncover an ancient metal hatch after 1. Walking Tower legs root into the ground (sequel to **Steal the Walking Tower** OPDC 2020); 2. Building a castle; 3. An earthquake.



A. Hatch

- Clock in center. Runes: "Open at the right time"
- Hands must be put to 3:15 to open
- Lightning (2d6 dmg) on wrong settings

B. Entry Room

- Carvings of planets & swirling magic. Ancient telescope aimed at moon. Globe of home planet.
- PCs disoriented as **Copy #1 of PCs** (w/magic items) created & separate out from them by a **future action** of the **Orrery** & is sent thru momentary **Green** gate to the **G1. Arrival Crater** on the Moon w/copy of the **Orrery** (see #2 below).
- PCs only see flashes of light

C. Hallway

- PCs **magic items** turn to clay and crumble
- Orrery sucks magic to power up. It hums and glows

D. Orrery.

- Undecipherable control panel
- Moving controls causes it to change to model time & space. This creates magical effects including time travel and portals thru space & planes
- Spinning arms hit those near it (2d6 dmg)

E. Control Results (in order):

1. Opens **permanent one-way Blue** gate from **M3. Moon** to **B. Entry Room**. 10 +1d6 **Spider Lizards** enter & block escape.

PCs will be hard pressed to survive attacking Spider Lizards (some may die). If PCs do not, in desperation, hit the controls again, a Spider Lizard accidentally does (possibly several times causing remaining results).

2. **Copy #1 PCs** created **back in time** as described in **B. Entry Room** & sucked thru **Green** gate to **G1 Arrival Crater** on the Moon. PCs now have a vision of this.

3. **Copy #2 of live PCs** (w/o magic items) created. **Orange** gate appears & sucks them in (sending them into the future) and then disappears. The PCs see this happen. They return here in **P. Copy #2 PCs Return**.

4. A PC (DM selects) from the future appears in a **Purple** gate. He says, "Pull the red lever up, then push the blue crystal two times!" then he & gate disappear.

5. Living PCs travel to the **G. Arrival Crater** on the Moon thru a **Red** gate, if they use the controls as told in #4

Spider Lizard (T-rextula): Armor Med; HD 4; Low Intelligence; Bite 3d6 (+ paralysis poison 1d3 mins); Tail Bash 1d6; Climb, Spit Mucus Glob or eject Web (rear arc) 1/day; large & hungry.

Alien: Armor Low; HD 6; Stunning Cone, Mind Eat, Levitate; other powers lost to age



F. Moon

- **Thin Air:** Con -4, **Light Gravity:** Str +4
- **Dark zone:** -10°F (if no warm clothes, 1d6 dmg hr.).
- **Sun zone:** 200°F (Exposed, 1d6/dmg min; Shade/shelter, 1d6 dmg hr.; Cave, no dmg). Arrives in 2-3 hrs. (lasts 6 hrs.)

G. Arrival Crater

- PCs arrive here thru **Red** Gate & see home world in space.
- Gate travel gives time distortion effect as if rested 1 day
- Orrery here is shut down, power gone.
- It is cold & dark, **Sun** zone in distance approaching

G1. Arrival Crater - Copy #1 PCs arrived here earlier thru **Green** gate. If any PCs were killed, their **Copy #1** versions (w/ magic items) are found alive here (Players play them).

- **Copy #1 PCs** found alive here are disoriented & recovering from travel. Last thing remembered is entering **B. Entry Room**.
- Do not know they are copies (role play to sort out)
- Eventually say rest of **Copy #1 PCs** :

"left in search of crystals to power the Orrery to return to the home world. They found a map & notebook about the Orrery on a dead alien body in a nearby cave. One note said, "Home world to moon: red lever up, push blue crystal 2x"

If no PCs died, they find a **Copy #1 PC** dead (w/magic items) (DM selects) from bad effects of gate travel. Has scribbled note w/info above.

H. Last Surviving Alien.

- Tall & gaunt, black eyes, tentacle arms, trapped on moon & is starving.
- Just discovered PCs & Orrery. Attacks to eat brains & take Orrery to get off moon
- Speaks about "reversing the process to return home"
- Has **warm clothes**, **Shooting Meteors** ring & 2 **Healing** ointments

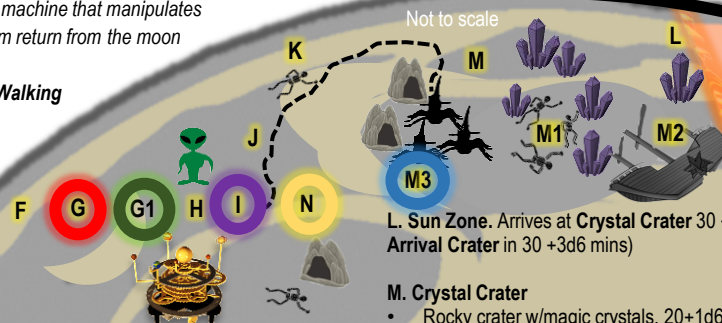
I. Pulled Back at inopportune moment

- PC who was seen in Orrery **result #4** is sucked back in time thru a momentary **Purple** gate to perform **result #4** & return
- Must say what he is supposed to, or break time continuum & cease to exist (see **Copy #1** or **#2 PCs** for replacement)

J. Trail. 30 + 3d6 min travel by long floating jumps following the tracks of **Copy #1 PCs** to **M. Crystal Crater** (efficient travel will reduce time)

K. Revenant.

- **Copy #1 PC** (DM selects) found dead. Killed by **Meteorite**
- Rises as **Revenant** (8 HD) that goes after herself! "You idiot! You killed me with your stupid adventures!"
- Wears **warm clothes** found on **alien body** at **G1**
- Can be reasoned with. If successful it runs to **Sun** zone to free itself.



L. Sun Zone. Arrives at **Crystal Crater** 30 +3d6 mins after PCs (then moves to **Arrival Crater** in 30 +3d6 mins)

M. Crystal Crater

- Rocky crater w/magic crystals. 20+1d6 can be collected (taking 3 min each)
- Crystals charged w/magic energy absorbed from space, explode on sharp impact (3d6 dmg, 10'R).

M1. Copy #1 PCs.

- Remaining members of **Copy #1** PCs found dead here. Killed accidentally by dropping crystals. Their magic items survived
 - One has notebook w/ map, notes 10 crystals charges orrery for return trip.
- If any PCs have died since arriving on moon, then their **Copy #1 PC** is found alive here & the Player controls him now.

M2. Crashed Spell-Rider Ship (helm dislodged, sails & rudder destroyed, hole in hull)

- Buried In wreckage (each takes 1d10 mins to find & dig out): Alien body w/**warm clothes** & **Acid Ball** wand 14 uses, **Healing Staff** 10 uses, **Poison Gas** scroll, **Free Movement** ring, **Heat Immunity** potion 1 use, **Warrior Summoning** horn, loaded working heavy **Cannon** & ammunition (6d8 dmg); Case of Rum 12 bottles. **Carpenter's Tools** w/ spare sails & rudder, patch kit, etc. (requires 3 individuals & 6d10 min to temporarily fix each item w/difficult check) (50% chance ship breaks apart after use, unless major overhaul).

M3. Blue Gate (created in **result #1**)

- Hovers at west side of crater. **B. Entry Room** seen thought it. 25 dmg closes gate to stop invasion.
- This is a difficult way for the PCs to return due to 10 **Spider Lizards** preparing to enter. If attacked, 1d6 (20 max) more arrive each min from nearby **Moon Fungus** filled caves. Will not peruse due to approaching **Sun** zone. Giant queen in cave.

N. Return to Arrival Crater

- Orrery drains 10 crystals &/or magic items & powers up.
- Using controls in **reverse pattern** returns **PCs & Copy of the Orrery** to the home planet thru a **Yellow** gate (see **O.**). Travels gives rest 1 day.

O. Return to D. Orrery Room. **Yellow** gate opens here (this Orrery merges w/original), the remaining **Spider Lizards** attack

P. Copy #2 PCs (w/o magic items) Return

- Return of Orrery triggers **Orange** gate to reappear out of time & deliver **Copy #2 PCs** back. Have each player run their **Copy #2 PC** to join the fight
- After the battle, **any remaining Copies of PCs** merge w/ their PC counter parts increasing them 1 level. Or they remain separate replacing any dead PCs.

Conclusion: With the **notebook**, the PCs figure out how to close the **Blue** gate (if not destroyed). It also describes how to efficiently use some controls of the Orrery as a **gate of plane travel** draining one crystal or magic item per use.