

# Nutcracker Adventures

Yeah, there isn't much here. These are the adventures I have actually run lately. I've written them out as 'Acts' and in general I run one to two Acts per session depending on how many scenes I can come up with per Act. Specific details of monsters, stats, NPCs, etc have been left out, because sometimes you have to tailor these things to the caliber of your group.

## The Falling Star Adventure

### Act One

The Player Characters (who may or may not know each other) all begin with their own reasons for visiting the Island Continent of Quarrelgard. However, along the way, their ship, the Swan Song is mysteriously ambushed by a Water Elemental Siren. She lures the crew and the captain to their watery deaths, leaving only the passengers (the players), one of whom turns out to be Pig Iron, a dwarf criminal.

Pig Iron was in the process of faking his death, and when he discovers that the other passengers are spared as well, he makes his exit with the help of his Water Elemental companion. The players first discover that the star the ship has been navigating by has gone missing. While they try to solve this problem- they blunder into hostile seas and are attacked by Sea Devils. Throughout these trials the group learns to rely on one another. Eventually a route is discovered and the ship sails on to Quarrelgard. Just as land is sighted, a shooting star is witnessed, which seems to land somewhere in Quarrelgard.

### Act Two

As the ship sails into the port of Crane (a port town in Quarrelgard) it is stopped and boarded by the Quarrelgard Navy who is searching for Pig Iron. During the time it takes the PC's to explain where Pig Iron is- a glowing woman – actually a star - descends from the sky to tell the group (including the Navy Officer in charge) that Pig Iron has already made it into central Quarrelgard, into the Dinosaur Outback. The shooting star witnessed earlier was the star's younger sister- Celestial Handmaiden Ciara. Pig Iron bribed someone at the Celestial Court to push her out of the sky – and now he is on his way to recover her so that he can make her his wife. Ciara has fallen somewhere into the Dinosaur Outback's darkest jungle. A substantial reward is offered to rescue Ciara (who faces dangerous dinosaurs, savage bugbear tribes, and the lecherous Pig Iron) and return her to the Celestial Court. The Navy is satisfied with seizing the ship, but will offer a reward for bringing Pig Iron to justice as well (he is wanted for several crimes). If the PC's are interested in taking up this adventure they may continue from here. Otherwise Pig Iron (and possibly the Fallen Star Ciara) can become recurrent NPCs- and the players

can continue adventuring in Quarrelgard. The Adventure could end here, or transition to an entirely different storyline with no problem.

### Act Three

The players could conceivably form an expedition into the jungles of Quarrelgard, possibly provided maps or even an astrolabe by the other star to help find her sister. Pig Iron and his Sea Elemental are also in a race to find Ciara first. Ciara herself has already been discovered by a friendly tribe of Bugbears who worship her as a goddess and are erecting a special temple in her honor deep in the jungle. The players may find themselves beset by dinosaurs, unfriendly Krak-kin Bugbears and Savage Ogres. They may run across Pig Iron in the jungle, who will use the opportunity to trap or discourage the players if possible (avoid any final conflict to the death if possible, because that will make a stronger ending scene/climax). Finally, when the players finally run across the friendly Bugbear tribe that is worshipping Ciara they may have an extremely hard time convincing her to leave. (after all, in the Celestial Court she is a mere handmaiden, and has to spend every night standing motionless in the sky- here she is worshipped as a goddess). Possibly the players may work out a compromise, force her to return, or allow her to remain behind. In any case- if Pig Iron is still alive, or his Sea Elemental, or any other mercenary companions associated with Pig Iron are still around, have them attack the Bugbear Village at this point, possibly with the aid of an enemy tribe. It is best to have Pig Iron escape during the chaos, especially if he can get a good hit in on one of the PCs. They'll want revenge later, and he'll be a fun recurring villain.

### Acts Four and beyond

Possibilities include the return to a city in one of the dinosaur-free areas of Quarrelgard, hiring a hot-air balloon or other airship to bring the Celestial Princess home..or staying on with the Bugbears for some other reason or adventure.

### Notes:

This adventure was specifically designed to take a starting group of heroes that don't know one another and then get them to rely on each other as a group so that a cohesive gaming group can be formed. In general, my group is very cooperative. If you have that one player that insists he doesn't want to join the group or sees no reason why he should help, let that character leave and then ignore him for the rest of the game unless he joins up with the main group. I hate that!

For Sea Devils I used the standard stats for Sahuagin from the Monstrous Manual. For Pig Iron, my basic rule was that he was around 4 levels higher than the highest level person in the group. His Sea Elemental Siren would have been around 4-6 hit dice I guess, but I never had her directly attack the players (she tried to use her music to lure them into the ocean, and she acted as a getaway vehicle for Pig Iron, but she never directly blasted anyone).



## Elemental Sand

The players begin by being hired as “special guards” for one of the large mining companies that operates in Drayenne. This particular company leases an area of the Drayenne Desert and has an operation sifting and mining for Elemental Sand (which is a specialized form of Elemental Earth).

Production has fallen off lately, and the players are sent to investigate.

### Act One

Players arrive at the Mining Base, on the edge of the dunes. In the playtest I had them arrive by Elephant-drawn cart, and they were allowed to draw supplies ( a tent and basic mining equipment if they wanted it) and then wander the camp and ask questions. The word around camp is that production has fallen off because most of the miners fear a gigantic turtle creature that has been seen wandering the desert. How big? Stories vary, but a knowledgeable Sand Dwarf named “Squeaky” (who only makes strange squeaking sounds which must be translated through a friend) explains that the Turtle Pelgara is the size of a small mountain, and it carries the remains of a ruined village on it’s back. The turtle is called Pelgara the Sleeper- who awakens only once every 200 years to wander the desert in search of a patch of Elemental Sand to lay her eggs. Because miners fear Pelgara’s wrath, most have been avoiding the forays out into the desert to sift sand. The location of a satellite quarry camp where Pelgara was last seen will be given to the players.

### Act Two

Players will be allowed to borrow the fastest mounts in the camp to travel out to the Sattelite camp where Pelgara was last seen. These turn out to be Giant Riding Crickets, each able to travel in wing-assisted 40-60’ leaps. A whole scene may be devoted to the fun of learning how to ride a Giant Cricket if the GM wishes. The players then make the journey out to the sattelite camp. Some desert dangers include Sand Goblins, Dust Devils, and Salt monsters.. but if the pacing is going fine there’s no need to challenge the players just yet. Have the players reach the Sattelite camp by nightfall, and stay the night. The miners at the sattelite camp turn out to have someone with them knowledgeable about Pelgara. He relates that although Pelgara awakens every 200 years, it has only been around 170 since the last awakening. Mention is made of Sand Goblins in the area, and Pelgara herself acting very strangely- walking blindly into cliffs, stumbling into ditches, etc. He believes she is sleepwalking. Players at this point are pointed in the direction of Pelgara herself. She is indeed massive, and carries the ruins of an entire villge on her

back. In the center of her back is a tall stone tower with what looks like new construction on it and a clock.

### Act Three

The GM may challenge the players just to get them aboard the turtles back. She drags the remains of a rope bridge behind her and moves very slow, or the players may try and leap their crickets up onto her back directly. In any case, as each foot comes down, the ground shakes and this can be somewhat unnerving. When the players arrive on the turtles back they can explore the village- which is indeed in ruins. Perceptive players may realize that they are being watched- and may even be able to detect the Sand Goblins that are hiding in the ruins, watching them. When the players reach the village square (where the stone tower is) a few Sand Goblins and a few Dun Cysts (new monster, see notes) will carry out an ambush to keep the players away from the tower.

### Act Four

The players investigate the Clock-Tower, and eventually discover the sleeping form of a Maker/Wizard deep in sleep, levitating in the highest chamber. He has been trying to communicate with Pelgara's subconscious for the past 7 years. Unfortunately, the Sand Goblin tribe that lives in the area has drugged both him and the Turtle, and now Pelgara is sleepwalking. If the wizard can be roused, he will rush to the window, gasp when he realizes that Pelgara is outside.

(Originally she was deep in a crater when he started his attempts at communication) and groggily explain that an antidote must be administered to Pelgara immediately, or else she will go berserk when the drug wears off. He will give the PCs a barrel of antidote (a glass ampule the size of a large keg) and a map to a secret section of the village ruins where a portal can be found into Pelgara's body. The PCs must fight their way past a second Sand Goblin attack, reach the secret portal, and administer the antidote. (This is achieved by slashing open one of her veins, which must be correctly identified, pouring the antidote in, and then binding the vein back up. )

### Notes:

Sand Goblins: a nomadic group, related to normal goblins, but far less civilized. The Sand Goblins resent the miners presence in their desert, because they have begun to mine the Elemental Sand for themselves. Their original idea was to use Pelgara as a gigantic detection device, and if she laid her clutch of Elemental Stone eggs, it would be that much more profitable for them.

Dun Cysts: These look like floating brains made of polished agate- each one about 2' in diameter, trailing 8-12 spiky tentacles. Although their coloration makes these creatures seem as if they are made of stone, they are actually animals, with a qasi elemental nature. The Sand Goblins have perfected a method for raising them as pets and guards.

## Nutcracker Names

When Gamemastering I find it useful to have a supply of names I can rely on if some place or person comes up and they need a name. For the Nutcracker Prince most of the names have a certain style to them. In any case, here are 135 unisex Nutcracker-y names you can rely on in a pinch.

Alelon	Eline	Avenigrin	Lyllinans	Grailus	Orin	Raistig	Nunkie	Anstus
Hannan	Canius	Martiana	Gailus	Malain	Pinore	Piskie	Hocker	Melchoir
Angalens	Driane	Ylion	Linenant	Vises	Stasia	Gelph	Trisk	Maunce
Ettican	Mancanes	Vileuse	Henna	Lianor	Hovre	Pixie	Estrik	Pryllallamon
Sondenis	Solange	Tinjur	Aeron	Hennesy	Sendaine	Laika	Astrid	Argive
Kendran	Brana	Bryll	Donnor	Velaine	Hannah	Korg	Agnulf	Lunimus
Greeve	Elant	Agrippa	Egius	Calance	Brell	Mer	Jiri	Brekke
Har	Agrenius	Cilan	Falrains	Lors	Oggle	Dolphine	Skulge	Kertiance
Rain	Noira	Maeve	Celaine	Kia	Ister	Janne	Midge	Phaene
Kira	Cleuraun	Branca	Tander	Coil	Zorim	Moxie	Nox	Goosedown
Cotton	Wue	Naune	Hyllaina	Lonus	Pelian	Kirta	Clarza	Ylana
Skein	Melot	Asalle	Nolwyn	Rosalus	Treika	Dorota	Thistle	Eric
Rafe	Perin	Jori	Mare	Aranaine	Runcible	Daisy	Daria	Crawain
India	Vaunt	Locke	Aundur	Lanwell	Jonna	Ysin	Dors	Crane
Moth	Kelacy	Nyssa	Nimue	Laire	Brig	Ceir	Hiro	Peaseblossom