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KEYS OF SCARAVORE

5e



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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION



THE KEYS OF SCARAVORE

The Universe is as ancient as it is dark. In the time before humanity, even before the rise of Gallifrey, whole empires rose and fell. The beings who built these empires were not like those who would follow. They were strange creations made not from evolution, but from mistakes and loopholes in the fabric of the Universe. They had powers and frailties that would never come again, and few even resembled the humanoid species that would follow them.

In this series of linked adventures, we invite you and your group to unveil the secrets of one of these long forgotten powers. You will track it across time before facing it in a surprisingly familiar place. However, while these adventures are linked together into a whole series, you can play them as individual episodes on their own.

If you are planning to play any of these adventures, you should stop reading here. The rest of this book is for the Gamemaster. In this introduction we'll give you an overview of each adventure and the plot arc that binds them together. Then, together, you can attempt to discover the Keys of Scaravore.



UNVEILING THE SECRETS

The adventures in this book are designed to be played either as disparate one-shots, or one after another as part of a longer story that takes your characters from 1st to 5th level. Much like a story arc in the television series, clues to the overarching villain and the final adventure that pits the characters against it, **The Mandala of Scaravore**, are woven through the first three adventures. In each adventure we'll note details about how to integrate this plot, building the series of episodes to a finale.



However, you may want to play each adventure, including the final one, as a stand-alone episode. In which case, you can just run it without any of these extra clues. Just ignore the extra notes on Scaravore and you're good to go.

If you plan to run the series as a linked campaign, as long as you run the last adventure as the finale you can use the other three in any order. Although, if you decide to do this, you may have to make minor adjustments to accommodate higher- or lower-level characters than the level intended. In each adventure, the characters will learn a little more about the deadly Scaravore while facing dire foes and trials.

The Keys of Scaravore campaign involves a hunt for one of the oldest creatures in the Universe. This being, known as Scaravore, is the last of a long-dead species, whose crimes led it to be imprisoned by its enemies many millennia ago. It was buried in a vault deep within planet Earth eons before even the Jagaroth spacecraft exploded to initiate life on the planet. From its prison the Scaravore watched the Silurians and dinosaurs evolve and perish, and saw humanity take their place. Dreaming of freedom, Scaravore was pleased to discover it could influence humanity in a way it never could with the Silurians. It began to reach out and plot its freedom, albeit with the patience of one already trapped for millennia.

Using its powerful psychic abilities, Scaravore began to influence humanity as best it could, driving them to develop tools so they might dig deeper into the earth. Over its resting

place a great city grew, its twisting streets mirroring the mind of Scaravore buried miles below. In the following adventures, the characters come across the influence of Scaravore, and learn how long it has been plotting its escape, and how powerful and dangerous it is. This leads them to modern day London, where they attempt to stop its rise at the hands of a strange cult that seeks to free it.

In the first adventure, the characters learn of Scaravore's existence and how it predates humanity. In the second, they discover it has a connection with the city of London. In the third adventure they discover Scaravore's plot will reach a crisis point in the early 21st century. Once they have all the clues, they will know where to go to face the creature before it destroys the Universe.

You are free to expand on the details here, or even add more clues to other adventures and weave them into the campaign. An arc style plot can take many forms. It might be just a reminder of a mystery, such as the words 'Bad Wolf' appearing in every adventure. However, it can be the focus of the whole story, like finding segments of the Key to Time, where each adventure focuses on the next segment. What level you choose to take is up to you. The clues we offer here give the campaign enough cohesion to link everything together without overshadowing the individual adventures.

If you'd like to add more clues, or place new connections in other adventures, you can use the following ideas in or between any of the adventures:

- ◉ A powerful psychic force takes control of the TARDIS for a moment, but the player characters are able to resist the power. While they know little about it the nearest planet such a force might have come from is Earth.
- ◉ On a visit to Earth, one of the friends or family of a character is drawn into the cult. However, it doesn't go well and they are left blank and unresponsive, only able to mutter the word Scaravore. They will be safe in a hospital, but the characters will clearly need to find out what happened and how to restore them.
- ◉ While visiting the most ancient museum in the Universe, the player characters notice a particular exhibit. It is an ancient example of Gallifreyan writing, carved into rock by the earliest of the Doctor's people. The words say 'Beware Scaravore'.
- ◉ A group of humans make an attempt to capture the characters' TARDIS. What is odd is that they aren't soldiers or criminals, just ordinary people. While they are not especially skilled they are numerous and highly dedicated. All they will say is that 'Scaravore must be obeyed'. Any who are captured suddenly suffer an extreme headache and collapse in moments as Scaravore will not allow its secrets to be revealed easily.
- ◉ The characters try to help the crew of an alien space station that watches Earth for cultural study from lightyears away. The crew suffer a horrific psychic energy attack and are left with severe mental trauma. Many begin to draw what looks roughly like a map of London anywhere they can do so.
- ◉ Someone attempts to contact the psychic power that seems to have been plaguing them. When they make contact they touch the mind of something unspeakably old and powerful. But they also suffer a horrible feeling of claustrophobia and the sensation of tons of earth crushing them.





SYNOPSSES AND SYNAPSES

The four adventures in this book are designed to take the characters across several different places in time and space. To give you a head start, the following offers a brief synopsis of each adventure.

PARADISE LOST (1ST LEVEL)

The ancient Silurians, who ruled Earth before humanity, were advanced enough to reach the stars. On the planet Aridius, they founded a colony millions of miles from home, with a few Neanderthal humans they took with them as servants and workers. However, having built the colony, the humans quickly came to realise they were considered expendable and revolted against their masters. The Silurians were cast out and the humans purged all signs of their former overlords.

When the player characters arrive on the planet, they find a settled and happy society, albeit one with a few quirks. There are signs of old advanced technology, but it has all fallen into disrepair without the Silurian scientists who really understood it. However, one system is in perfect working order. The player characters activate an ancient defence system, which will very soon 'purge' the settlement of all life. Even worse, only one of the long-lost Silurians can turn off the system.

Luckily, the outcast Silurians found a place to hibernate with the technology they had remaining. They have slept for centuries, hoping to be woken when time and the environment saw the end of their recalcitrant servants. They never expected the colony to thrive, so have never woken up. The characters must find them to enlist their aid. But for these Silurians, the memory of the humans' betrayal is still very fresh, and they will take a lot of convincing to stop the defence system wiping them out.

In the Scaravore campaign, the characters discover some clues here to the existence of something ancient and powerful existing before the Silurians and having a powerful influence on early humans.

A KIND OF MAGIC (3RD LEVEL)

It is often said that any significantly advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic. This is even more evident on the planet of Saphira. A property of the planet enhances psychic power and interferes with technology. This has left the colony at a mediaeval level of technology, but allowed them to use 'magic' to compensate. After 400 years, they have forgotten there is a larger galaxy out there.

Recently, the crew of a scientific vessel discovered Saphira and landed in a biological Zygon spacecraft. They saw the opportunities in understanding the powerful psychic abilities of the populace and set about secretly studying and experimenting on them to learn more. Unfortunately, the science team were not the only ones to rediscover Saphira. A ship from the enemy Draconian Empire has also made planetfall, but, being reliant on mechanical technology, fell foul of the planet's effects and crashed. The populace believes the Draconians are some sort of dragon and their arrival is cause for great concern and excitement.

To make matters worse, the scientific team has been trying to stir up this trouble against the Draconians as they want to see hostilities between the people reignite in a war they think humanity can win. Saphira is set to be the spark that ignites interstellar war, and possibly provides a key for a new weapon in that war.

During the campaign, the characters discover an early version of the Mandala of Scaravore that looks like old London. While it gives them a place to head, it doesn't tell them when they need to go there. London is old and Scaravore has existed for millennia. The characters need to know the best era to visit London for any chance of dealing with it.

WESTWARD BOUND (4TH LEVEL)

The characters find themselves in the Old West of 1843. Following the Emigrant Road, also known as the Oregon Trail, they discover that several aliens are among the settlers looking to make a new life for themselves on the frontier. As the characters join a settler caravan, they become embroiled in the internal schemes of the disparate group, and face the many dangers of the journey.

A group of shapeshifters are hunting some of the aliens in the caravan. Old enmities have carried across lightyears, and there is nowhere to hide on the untamed frontier. But with other problems on the journey, finding the alien hunters and predicting their attacks becomes more and more difficult, especially as frictions make it hard to keep the settlers together.

In the Scaravore campaign, the characters discover one of the aliens they help is connected to the Scaravore cult. An analysis of their mind and connection to Scaravore shows that whatever is going on will have a turning point in the early 21st century. Now that they know when and where to go, they can travel to London to face the creature.

THE MANDALA OF SCARAVORE (5TH LEVEL)

The characters arrive in London, either by chance or because they have followed the clues to stop Scaravore getting free. In their investigations, they discover a cult has formed around the creature, each member having had their mind taken over by the creature's psychic power. The cult works tirelessly to free their master and has taken control of a dig site ostensibly doing maintenance work to Bank underground station.

Unfortunately, before the characters can get close to the dig site, the cult takes them prisoner. They attempt to convert the characters to the cult using the streets of London. As Scaravore has been influencing the growth of the city since its inception, the streets have formed as a mirror to Scaravore's

mental map. Those who walk particular paths find the 'Mandala of Scaravore' has tuned their minds into the mental power of the creature, allowing it to possess and control them.

If they escape the cult, the characters learn that there is a key to Scaravore's vault, crafted by those who imprisoned it so many years ago. This three-part device has been hidden by the cult, as Scaravore both yearns for and fears it. But if the characters can locate all the parts, they can face Scaravore and make sure its prison remains sealed forever.

