



MI - GO MINE

(AN ADVENTURE SET IN R.E.H.'S MYTHIC HYBORIA)

OVERVIEW

In attempting to track down the origins of a mysterious artifact, the PCs venture into a remote, mountainous region of Ophir known for its played-out (and long abandoned) mines. They soon discover a fresh trail leading up the side of an old volcanic cone--and an active mining operation going on inside, presided over by sinister mi-go, their alchemist quisling, and a band of slavers armed with alien weaponry!

START

PCs begin in the Ophirien city of Ianthe, perhaps the wealthiest metropolis in Hyboria. Gold foil covers the facades of great marble houses, and even the street-thieves are jaded about picking someone's pocket for less than a precious stone. Mercenary work is common (and well-

paid) here, which may have originally drawn the heroes. But whatever the reason, the PCs are actively sought out by the scholar **Terlus** and invited to his 'modest' villa to hear a proposal.

Over wine, Terlus shows the heroes his most recent acquisition: what looks like a piece of gnarled, frozen driftwood covered with a dozen strange protrusions. An expert antiquarian, he is at a loss to account for its possible origins--even from among the pre-cataclysmic civilizations (what he doesn't tell the PCs is that he accidentally froze one of his slave girls solid while experimenting with the device, a feat he has been unable to duplicate.)

Terlus explains he bought the artifact from a caravan merchant who found it in a mountainous area to the east, previously known for its gold and sapphire mines before they played out. He is prepared to pay handsomely, even by Ophirean standards, if the PCs are able to procure more objects like it.

By dint of their own investigations in lanthe, PCs can discover additional information about the mountainous eastern region: 1) it has an evil reputation, fostered by strangely colored lights showing high among the peaks, and misshapen silhouettes occasionally glimpsed flitting across the sky, and 2) a band of Nemedian and Corinthian slavers are rumored to be active in the area, though why they'd be operating out of such a remote location is anyone's guess.

GETTING THERE

Well-maintained caravan roads of crushed stone makes it relatively easy to get to the region, dominated by the silhouette of an enormous volcanic cone. PCs with ranks in Hunter or Barbarian might notice a paucity of wildlife in the area, growing scarcer the closer they get to the volcano.

At some point the PCs will come across the remains of a slaver ambush on one of the caravans. The bodies of two horses rot in the sun, and there are bloodstains in the dust, as well as the hilt from a shattered sword. Someone has hastily tried to cover their tracks, but not well enough. They lead in the direction of the ominous cone.

NIGHT VISITORS

The group will have to camp before reaching the cone's base. That night, a mi-go scout from the mine will fly over. Any PC on watch should have a chance to spot what looks like a cluster of bright yellow dots floating high in the air, and hearing a curious, buzzing voice. Watching the yellow dots for an extended period will have a mesmerizing effect: the PC has to make a Tough (-2) Mind roll or "lose time" and become conscious again at dawn, unaware of what happened. The scout will immediately fly off if any hostile action is taken (e.g. a PC reaches for a bow or spear, or starts to use magic).

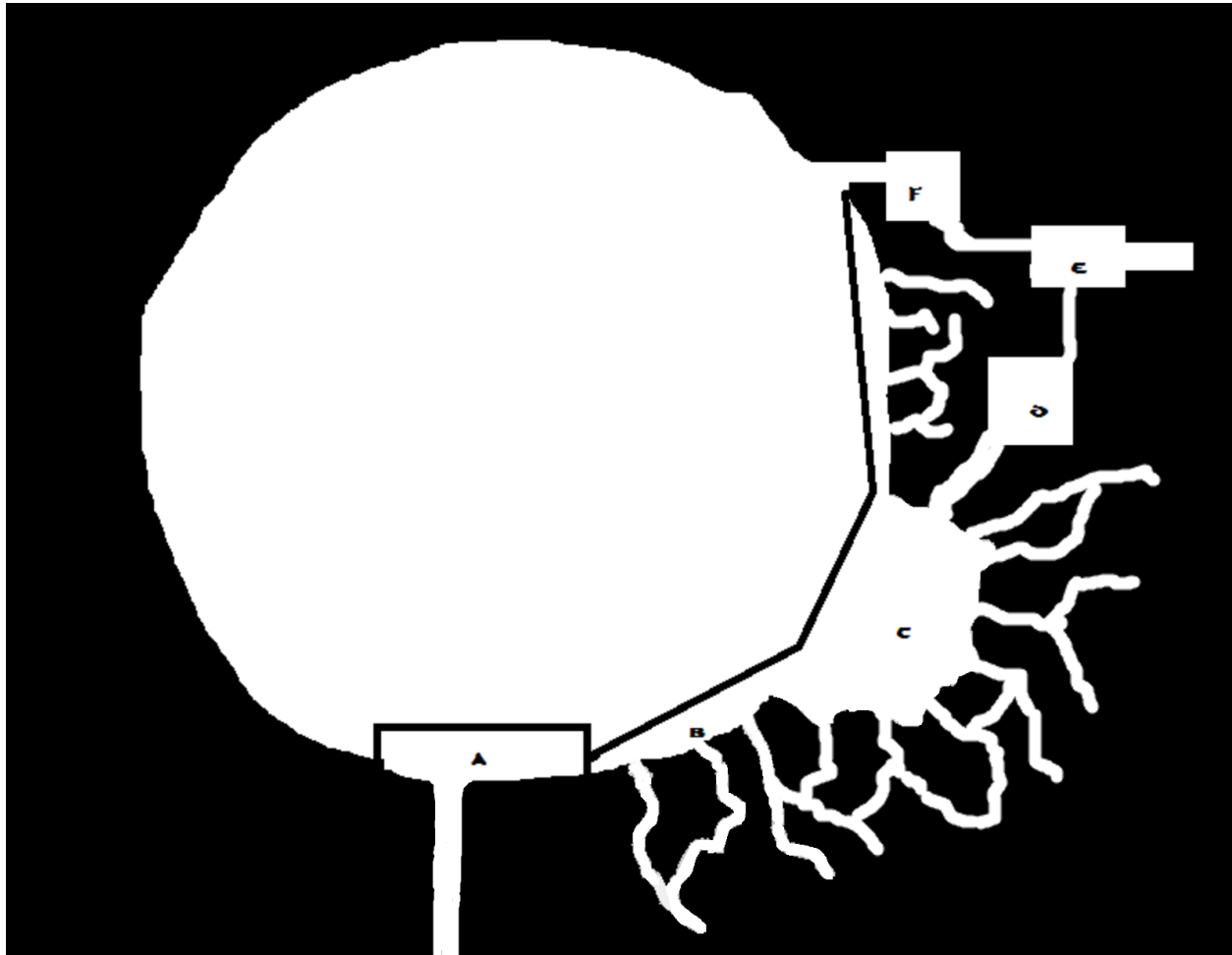
From this point on, the mi-go are aware of the PCs presence, who in turn warn **Ciro** and the slavers. An ambush is hastily prepared in room **C** of the mine (see **key**).

ENTER TU VALKATH

A trail winds upwards around the volcanic cone, leading to a mine complex near the top. Alert PCs have a chance to spot additional signs people have been moving through here recently (debris, foot prints, etc.) A successful Demanding (-4) Mind check will uncover strange, triangular shaped tracks in an erratic pattern, several weeks old (mi-go prints).

At some point on the trail, select one PC with ranks in Sorcerer or the highest Mind score: this hero will hear a raspy voice echoing inside their head. The voice is speaking in some archaic language, but the PC will be able to understand it perfectly via the wonders of telepathy! The voice introduces itself as **Tu Valkath**, a Valusian sorcerer thousands of years old, “imprisoned” somewhere in the mine complex above. Tu implores the PC to try and help free him. If the hero pledges to help, Tu will warn him (and only him) just before the ambush in room **C**. If the hero refuses, Tu will contact another PC and entreat their help.

A captive of a mi-go brain cylinder, Tu’s main motivation is to lure a PC close enough so that he can possess their body, “swapping” consciousness with his trapped brain. See the key entry for room **E**.



THE MINE

As PCs draw nearer to the top of the trail, any animals with them will begin to balk about going further, sensing the alien presence close by.

The trail ends at a tunnel, reinforced by timber, that cuts directly through the cone and exits onto the open shaft of the volcano itself (see map). This was originally a sapphire mine, but deposits of a mysterious metal ore called green tok'l have drawn the mi-go's attention. Formed by ejecta, the uppermost section of the volcano actually bears the deepest deposits, and mining is therefore concentrated at the top.

The open shaft drops for hundreds of feet. Any fall down here is fatal. Faint glowing can be glimpsed at the bottom, suggesting the volcano is not as dead as it appears.

KEY

A: A set of rickety switchback stairs leads down from the tunnel opening to this platform, jutting out with supports over the shaft.

B: A series of winding mine tunnels carved into the igneous rock, following veins of green tok'l ore. There is a 1-3 (d6) chance at the end tunnel a work party of d6 slaves are laboriously scraping the ore from the rock and collecting it in baskets. The slaves are too numb from repeated nerve-whipping, hypnotic contact from the mi-go, and the toxic effects of the ore to do much but whimper with protest if someone tries to 'rescue' them.

C: This is a widened out common area, where ore buckets were originally filled and hauled by chains up the side of the shaft. It now serves as crude living quarters for both the slaves and slavers, though there are several troughs where the tok'l ore is further pounded and sifted into a purer form fit for transport--backbreaking work.

Unless the PCs somehow evaded detection by the mi-go scout, the slaver gang will be hiding here in ambush. One of the functional ore buckets will be swung out over the heroes and its contents' released. An unlucky PC will take 2d6 LB damage and two more close by will take d6. The PC taking the full two dice will also have to make a Hard (-1) Agility check or be buried for d3 rounds. The slavers, meanwhile, will come swarming out to attack (two **Captains**, plus a number of rabble equal to 2-3x the PCs number).

A PC befriended by Tu Valkath will receive a telepathic warning moments before the trap is sprung. The hero can make an Initiative check modified by the slaver leader's initiative (-1); if successful, the hero can act just as the ore bucket is swinging into place, shouting a warning, pushing someone out the way, etc.

Sounds of fighting here will alert Ciro at **E** and the mi-go at **F**.

Stashed away in one corner is a mi-go "food machine," a squat sphere that sucks in bacteria from the air and converts it into a gray, pap-like gruel. Though nutritious, the stuff tastes horrible. The slavers stage raids on nearby caravans just to get something more edible.

☞: Tok'l ore is gathered here, placed in a cart and “shipped” through a mystical gate to a processing center on Charon, in orbit around Yuggoth. The gate is a section of blank wall between what looks like a curious pair of metal spears with very long tines (tuning forks). The mi-go or Ciro can activate the gate through an elaborate ritual; it's not functioning when the PCs enter. Unless the GM wants it to be . . .

☛: This area serves as both Ciro's living quarters and laboratory. There are a number of recognizable mechanical devices, including an Acheronian water-clock, and completely alien pieces of mi-go biotechnology, as well as the usual alchemical apparatus of ambelics, beakers, mortars and pestles, etc.

At the sounds of combat, Ciro grabs his lightning gun and hides in the darkness of the Chamber of Ancients (the smaller rectangular chamber to the east), ready to zap the first person who enters through the doorway. Insane and completely enthralled by his alien masters, he will be difficult to deal with except by force. Ciro will accuse the PCs of trying to steal his “immortality” just before he opens fire.

The Chamber of Ancients contains Tu Valkath's brain cylinder (and cylinders for any other disembodied NPCs the GM might want to include). It was originally constructed for Ciro so he could enjoy intelligent conversation with fellow humans. Now, it's essentially a trap: once Ciro has been dealt with, PCs inside the chamber can communicate directly with Tu through the speaker mechanism attached to his cylinder.

Tu entreats players to try and open the cylinder to free his “vital force” for eternity. This is a ruse--flesh to metal contact with the cylinder allows Tu to try and possess his would-be benefactor. Allow the PC to resist by making a Mind check, with Tu's Mind (-4) as a modifier, plus any Ranks in a career that requires mental discipline (e.g. Sorcerer, Scholar, Priest). If successful, the PC throws off the attempt and can drop the cylinder. Otherwise, Tu takes over and the unfortunate PC's consciousness is transferred to the Valusian's ancient grey matter. Other players may or may not have a chance to notice something is immediately different about the possessed PC (GM's choice). Tu's main concern is to protect his new body from harm, prompting him to stay out of combat, if possible. But if pressed, he can cast spells as a Rank 4 sorcerer!

The possession lasts for as long as the GM deems is dramatically appropriate, at which point the player should get another chance to resist. If “defeated,” Tu's consciousness goes back in the cylinder, until someone touches it again . . .

(Note that Ciro, having once already staved off a possession attempt, is well aware of the dangers posed by Tu).

☛: The corridor leading to this chamber is lined with more complicated mi-go bio machinery, somewhat reminiscent of a wasp or termite nest. Floating at head-height in the middle of the hall is a shiny metal sphere the size of a large fist. This is a **Sentry Sphere**, and it will come hurtling at PCs to try and keep them from entering the chamber proper.

The chamber itself houses the generators necessary to power the gate at ➤, as well as serve as living quarters for the two mi-go that inhabit it. At sight of the PCs, one of the fungoid horrors will open fire with a weapon of the GM's choice (see **Appendix B**), while the second activates a self-destruct sequence for the mine. Unless killed that round, the mi-go sets off a charge buried deep in the volcano. A boom shakes the chamber, and smoke begins to pour up the shaft!

The mi-go have no intention of fighting to the death. Once the charge has been activated, both will go winging through the open section into the shaft and ride a thermal up and out of the volcano complex, heading for a secret base farther north.

ESCAPE!

Once the whole place starts shaking and rumbling ominously, smart PCs will want to get out as quickly as possible. Dumb PCs will try to stick around and salvage the strange mi-go technology. Make the dumb ones regret it.

Savvy PCs can hightail it down the trail and put some distance between them and the now-active volcano to avoid a lava bath. Needless to say, the mine and everything in it will be destroyed.

Terlus makes good on his part of the deal if the PCs are able to bring him any mi-go artifacts, regardless of their condition. Of course, PCs may want to hold on to alien weapons for themselves . . . which means they might be getting visits at night from strange visitors, speaking in buzzing voices . . .

APPENDIX A: CAST OF CHARACTERS (IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE)

TERLUS, WEALTHY SCHOLAR

Attributes	Combat Abilities:
Strength 0	Attack: 0
Agility 0	Damage: dagger, d6L
Mind 2	Defense: 0
Appeal 1	Protection: 0
	Lifeblood: 7

A middle-aged Ophirean, soft of voice and body, driven by an insatiable curiosity to collect pre-cataclysm artifacts. His polite manners belie a jaded streak, though he will not double-cross the PCs. He has a small army of bodyguards hiding close by if the heroes decide to play rough-- use the stats for the Slaver Captains, below.

TU VALKATH, DISEMBODED BRAIN

Attributes	Combat Abilities:
Strength -	Attack: possession (see mine key)
Agility -	Damage: -
Mind 4	Defense: 0
Appeal 1	Protection: d6+2 in cylinder
	Lifeblood: 2

Tu Valkath is a Valusian sorcerer from the age of King Kull. He tried to strike a bargain with 'Star Demons' (mi-go) in order to become more powerful than Thulsa Doom, which eventually led to his imprisonment within a brain cylinder. Over the centuries, he has honed his mental powers to allow his consciousness to briefly escape the cylinder's confines.

If he succeeds in taking over a PC and escaping the mine, he will initially be interested only in carousing and indulging his senses after years of deprivation. However, at some point he might decide to try and carve a kingdom of his own out of the new Hyborian landscape.

SLAVER CAPTAINS

Attributes	Combat Abilities:
Strength 1	Attack: +2
Agility 1	Damage: nerve whips (see Appendix B)
Mind 0	Defense: 1
Appeal 0	Protection: d6-3 (light armor)
	Lifeblood: 7

Flavius and Runco are two Nemedian brothers, former mercenaries who have turned to the more lucrative practice of procuring slaves for their mi-go masters, whom they believe are 'Demons from the Stars.' Both are armed with nerve whips. Flavius is 6'2," with prematurely graying hair, and Runco is shorter and darker.

TYPICAL SLAVERS

Attributes	Combat Abilities:
Strength 0	Attack: 0
Agility 0	Damage: sword or spear, d3 (as rabble)
Mind 0	Defense: 0
Appeal 0	Protection: d6-3 (light armor)
	Lifeblood: 3

A motley assortment of Corinthians and Nemedians. All are Rank 1 Bandits.

CIRO, MI - GO QUISLING

Attributes

Strength 0
Agility 1
Mind 3
Appeal 0

Combat Abilities

Initiative 1
Melee 0
Missile 1
Defense 2

Lifeblood: 10
Villain Points: 5
Protection: none or special (see below)
Weapons: lightning gun (see Appendix B)

Boons/Flaws

Excellent Laboratory
Alert
Morgazzon's Curse (paranoid)

Careers

Alchemist 3
Scholar 1
Noble 0
Worker (Mining Operations) 0

Ciro is an Ophirean from a minor noble house, originally tasked with innovating the refinement of gold ore using alchemical processes. He was contacted by mi-go scouts while at a remote mine, hypnotized, and has been in their thrall ever since. Lured on by promises of 'immortality' (encasement in a brain cylinder), he willingly serves his fungoid masters without need for further mesmerism. Unfortunately, his researches into non-causal alien technology and long term exposure to green tok'l have warped his brain. He will perceive the PCs as interlopers, wanting to wrest away all his secrets.

If you want to make the encounter with Ciro tougher, have him wear a suit of mi-go reactive armor underneath his robes (see Appendix B).

SENTRY SPHERE

Attributes

Strength 1
Agility 3
Mind -
Lifeblood: 6

Combat Abilities:

Attack: +3
Damage: special (see below)
Defense: 4
Protection: d6

This shiny silver sphere floats on invisible patterns of force. Its sole purpose is to patrol and guard certain areas designated by the mi-go. The sphere attacks by flying at the closest target; just before impact two fork-like blades spring forth. On a hit, the blades do d6 damage, ignoring up to 2 points of armor, and the sphere becomes "stuck" to its target. On subsequent turns, a drill extrudes from the sphere and starts to burrow into flesh, doing d6H damage and ignoring any armor until the target dies. It requires a successful Strength check with the Sphere's strength (1) as a modifier in order to pull it out.

There are rumors of so-called 'Golden Spheres' used by elite mi-go with more elaborate weaponry.

MI - GO

Attributes

Strength 0
Agility 1
Mind 3
Lifeblood: 10

Combat Abilities:

Attack: +1
Damage: d6 nipper or weapon (see Appendix B)
Defense: 1 (2 if airborne)
Protection: d6

These mi-go are from the Explorer caste, a rogue group secretly processing tok'l ore on the moon of Yuggoth. To this end they try to keep a low profile, using indigenous human technology when possible, as well as native Hyborians as agents. Their main motivation is self-preservation; they can always flee and set up another mine somewhere else on this primitive world

APPENDIX B: ALIEN WEAPONRY

Lightning Gun: This artifact is oval shaped, about the size of a large egg, with strange indentations and protrusions covering the surface. It can be gripped by humans somewhat awkwardly (-1 to Attack roll for the first few uses). A pair of 'horns' like a stag-beetle's projects from the top, between the wielder's knuckles. When directed at a target and triggered, a purple charge of electricity arcs from the horns, with a range increment of 80'. Damage is d6H+3, ignoring most armor--targets in metal armor taken an additional point of damage and are +2 to hit. The gun has an internal power supply; any time the user rolls a natural '2' result when attacking, it runs out of power and becomes useless.

Nerve Whip: This looks like a stylized sword hilt. When activated, a curling 'rope' of pale green light extrudes from the tip out to 5'. The whip does d6L damage (no strength modifier), ignoring primitive armor. In addition, anyone struck has to make a Tough (-2) Strength check or collapse writhing in pain for d3 rounds. Even if successful, the target still takes a disadvantage die the next round due to pain (A PC can pay a Hero Point to "shrug off" the incapacitating effects, but not the disadvantage die).

Lamprey Shuriken: This bio-weapon looks like a starfish with barbs on the ends of its arms, and is designed to be 'worn' attached to mi-go hide or armor. When thrown, it flies with disturbing accuracy and force (range increment of 30'). On a hit, it attaches itself to the target with several barbs and begins biting with a central beak; on subsequent rounds this does d6 damage, chewing through armor at the rate of 1 point of protection per round. On a miss, the shuriken arcs around and comes back to the thrower's hand the same round. A typical wielder will carry half a dozen of these horrors.

Simply pulling a shuriken off requires a Moderate Strength check, but causes another d6 damage to the target as the barbs rip free. Someone with an edged weapon, however, can cut the shuriken in two, killing it on a Moderate Agility check at the rate of 1 per round.

Mi-go Reactive Body Armor: This is a special suit of bio armor designed for use against primitive cultures who rely on hand to hand weapons. It consists of a carapace and several attached plates to cover the user's body; there are tendrils on the inside of the plates that worm their way into the wearer as per standard bio armor (no damage). The armor's exterior is covered with a number of warty, bulbous pustules.

Reactive body armor provides d6 protection with no Agility loss. In addition, when struck, there is a 1-4 chance (d6) that one of the pustules bursts, spraying a burst of organic acid at the (melee) attacker. This hits automatically for d6 damage the first round, d3 the second, destroying any intervening armor in the process. Depleted pustules eventually grow back.