

As Volcano World shudders in anticipation of a colossal eruption, the heroes must brave an angry mountain's interior to recover life-saving treasures brought up from the planet's core.

Every few centuries, Mt. Mykulas—located in the scarred heart of Volcano World—explodes raining fire and ash over the continent. Immediately preceding each such eruption, the mountain disgorges a cache of magmatic, baseball size baubles known for both their otherworldly beauty and their naturally energized cores.

Traditionally, these colorful sphericals are harvested and freely gifted to provide wintertime warmth, power, and light to primitive settlements and war-torn villages found in some of Mongo's most perilous regions.

The heroes must brave Mt. Mykulas's labyrinthine network of lava tubes, face parties of warlike dragon men, and come face-to-face with something even those brave natives fear in order to rescue a lost party of explorers and aid in the recovery of these energized baubles.

HEROES WANTED

"It is a rare sight indeed to spot a skyship and its crew grounded in the middle of Volcano World, but ahead of you sits a three-finned airscout in the shadow of a smoldering peak—the dreaded Mt. Mykulas."

The heroes encounter a small band of scientists at work inside a canvas tent. There are no indications that the group has any affiliation with the emperor as all are appropriately attired for extreme heat and the silver airscout is free of imperial insignia.



The scientists welcome the heroes into their tent and offer them food and drink. They also inform them that they are on a mission to recover volcanic "sphericals" from the volcano – naturally energized glass globules that can offer power and heat to less-developed villages. They present a half-dozen examples for examination, all of which resemble hand-crafted glass blown Christmas tree ornaments, but each exhibiting a warm, pulsing glow.

Successful Science rolls determine that the energized cores of the sphericals can be tapped like batteries to function as Medium Power Crystals. Additionally, if shattered against a hard surface (Range 4/8/16 if thrown), the glass orbs act like grenades, scattering their shards within a Medium Blast Template and causing 2d6 damage.

While the heroes examine the sphericals, the scientists communicate with other members of their party via radiophone. While investigating the lava tubes, they encountered a roving band of dragon men, but something spooked these natives, and they fled. As the back-and-forth conversation continues, a tremendous roar is heard, and the radiophone goes silent.

Not appropriately equipped or skilled enough to brave the tunnels and assist their companions, the scientists ask the heroes for help. Additionally, as Mykulas is growing more active and an eruption is imminent, they hand the heroes large, crimson-colored sacks and task them with collecting as many sphericals as possible before they return. Each sack can hold two dozen sphericals..

BURNING INSIDE

A couple hundred feet from the entrance, the lava tube turns slightly left and lighting becomes an issue for those without a light source or Low Light Vision.

While the tunnels are hazy with sulfurous fumes, a successful Notice roll detects the unmistakable scent of wood smoke (a raise allows the hero to determine that the scent is that of burning daggerfist cactus – a succulent native to Volcano World). Survival (tracking) rolls allow the heroes to trace the source of the burning smell to a sloping side passage. The floor is mostly free of debris, so it is extremely difficult to spot actual tracks, however a raise does note a couple subtle boot prints in the dust.

The heroes eventually find themselves at the edge of a large chamber (30 feet high) containing a solidified lava lake. A fire burns brightly at its center with animal skins scattered about for bedding and several tunnels branch off on all sides

including a large one on the opposite side of the chamber. A group of dragon men are present, a couple of whom appear to be nursing injuries, wounds sustained in an encounter with the party from above.

If combat occurs (surprise checks are made at -2 due to the fire, dancing shadows, and swirling smoke), the dragon men defend themselves, but scatter and attempt to flee into the side tunnels once half their number is Incapacitated.

A search of the campsite reveals 10 intact sphericals in a basket as well as several crudely rendered cave paintings depicting a towering beast with eyes of flame.

☞ **Dragon Man (2 per hero):** Use Dragon Man stats in *Flash Gordon*. Two begin the fight Shaken.

THE NIGHT VISITORS

No matter if the heroes pursue the fleeing dragon men or they continue forward, they eventually arrive at a second crossroads, this time exhibiting a number of unusual features including stalactites and windows to upper levels. There are also a half-dozen sphericals found here. This time, however, dragon men wait in the shadows to attempt to surprise the heroes.

Midway through this encounter, the battle is interrupted by a bone-chilling roar! Suddenly, a towering, horned beast approaches from ahead! The dragon men cry out in fear, shouting a name in their guttural tongue: "Vuul Kanuk!"

Everyone present must make Fear checks including any remaining dragon men. Those who stand bravely against the approaching beast eventually see, with successful Notice rolls, that there is something odd about the monster. It is a wooden, wheeled construct enwrapped in sheets of animal hide. Three small figures (fire dwarfs) operate the "creature" from within—one pushes it along the uneven floor, another controls its "breath," and a third puppeteers the limbs.

VUUL KANUK

The fire dwarfs constructed this machine to resemble a creature of legend feared by the dragon men. It is slow moving and not really designed for combat, though it does feature a crude lava-throwing torch that can be sprayed at targets.

Vuul Kanuk: Size 3, Handling -2, Top Speed 3 MPH, Toughness 4, Crew 3

Weapon: Flamethrower

Should the machine be wrecked, or a single wound be inflicted upon any one of the operators, the dwarfs leap off and vanish into the caves.

☞ **Dragon Man (2 per hero):** Use Dragon Man stats in *Flash Gordon*. All wield spears (Damage Str+d6, Reach 1, Parry +1 if used two-handed).

☞ **Fire Dwarf (3):** See stats on the right. All are unarmed.

THE MOUNTAIN RAGES

As the heroes descend deeper into the heart of Mt. Mykulas, two events become more commonplace – random encounters with fire dwarf patrols and powerful tremors as the mountain prepares to blow its top (see *Mongoquake* in *Flash Gordon*)! Eventually, they arrive in an enormous chamber illuminated by flowing streams of molten lava (no more illumination penalties) and occupied by a band of fire dwarfs who surround and threaten the captured explorers. Additionally, an enormous cache of sphericals lies scattered throughout this room, so the heroes must work quickly and efficiently to rescue the prisoners, gather as many sphericals as possible, and escape from the volcano via a hidden skylight (Survival (tracking) to spot footprints in the loose clinker leading out) before the eruption!

The gathering of sphericals and the retreat out of the mountain is handled as a Multi-Person Dramatic Task requiring four Task Tokens per hero (see Dramatic Tasks in *Flash Gordon*) and lasts four rounds, at the end of which, the heroes and the explorers exit the mountain.

As this chamber is close to Mt. Mykulas's central vent, the air is thick with dangerous smoke and Vigor rolls must be made each round to avoid a level of Fatigue, unless the heroes are adequately masked (a strip of fabric torn from their own clothing is acceptable).

☞ **Fire Dwarf (2 per hero):** See below.

FALL IN ONE NIGHT

Once free of the mountain, the heroes should have enough time to escort the rescued explorers to their camp and get a safe distance before the volcano erupts! The heroes are asked to deliver the recovered sphericals to settlements across the continent. The gifts are received with great appreciation and new alliances with the Freeman are forged.

FIRE DWARF

Rarely encountered in the blasted lands of Volcano World, the fire dwarfs make their homes within volcanos. They are easily identified by their rose-colored skin and their eyes that glow an eerie red in total darkness.

Attributes: Agility d8, Smarts d6, Spirit d8, Strength d6, Vigor d6

Skills: Athletics d6, Common Knowledge d6, Fighting d6, Intimidation d6, Notice d8, Persuasion d6, Shooting d6, Stealth d8, Taunt d6

Pace: 5 (d4 running die); Parry: 5; Toughness: 5 (1)

Edges: –

Gear: Red leather armor (+1), short spear (Str+d4)

Special Abilities:

- **Environmental Resistance (Heat):** +4 to Vigor rolls to resist heat, -4 from heat-based damage.
- **Low Light Vision:** Dwarf eyes are accustomed to the dark of their subterranean cities. They can see in all but pitch black conditions and ignore attack penalties for Dim and Dark lighting.
- **Size -1:** Fire dwarfs average around four feet tall.