



BEYOND COUNTLESS DOORWAYS

A PLANAR
SOURCEBOOK
by
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True Conjunction With Karlectash

A web enhancement by Monte Cook

Beyond Countless Doorways discusses what happens when planes go into and come out of conjunction as they metaphysically move in higher-dimensional space. It also mentions the idea of a true conjunction, where two planes align so closely that they almost fuse into one single plane, at least for a time.

This web enhancement describes what might happen if a world were to come into true conjunction with an energy plane called Karlectash. Use it to introduce your players to the concept of conjunctions the hard way: having Karlectash fuse with your standard campaign world.

This article details an event you can use with the *Beyond Countless Doorways* book of planes by Monte Cook, Wolfgang Baur, Colin McComb, and Ray Vallese. Find out more about the book at www.montecook.com/mpress_Door.html. However, you don't need the book to take advantage of this material, including a new monster: the karlectar. This free web enhancement gives you all the information you need to insert it in any d20 System fantasy campaign.

KARLECTASH

Karlectash is an energy plane and, in the vast scheme of the multiverse, it isn't even a particularly interesting or important one. A traveler to the plane would find no gravity and no ground—no native solid matter at all, in fact. He would find no air to breathe. He would only find torrents of endless, cascading alien energy.

This means the traveler could not move without the aid of magic (since there is no air here, even wings are powerless to help a creature move). The visitor would immediately begin to suffocate unless he had some magical means of breathing energy, had his own air supply, or simply did not need to breathe.

Perhaps even worst of all, a planar traveler made of corporeal matter suffers 10d6 points of electricity damage each round he is within the plane, enough so that even with a *protection from energy* spell, he is likely to succumb quickly to this place's power.

Needless to say, most planar travelers steer well clear of Karlectash. Not only is it incredibly dangerous and inhospitable, but no one's ever found a good reason to go there. It's not even a very good plane to use to reach other planes. For while Karlectash moves into conjunction with a great many planes—proving that the Countless Worlds are not without irony—it moves out of conjunction with them just

as quickly. This terrible plane of destruction is known as a “rogue plane,” in that it shifts about the higher dimensions much faster than most planes, in what seem to be random fits and starts and in unpredictable directions.

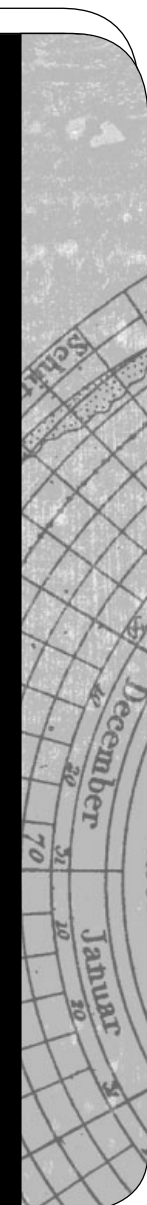
Most people, even those well schooled in cosmology, discount this energy plane. Now, however, the inhabitants of one plane cannot ignore Karlectash any longer. The plane draws close and, in this monumental moment, we see that things will never be the same again.

PRELUDE TO CONJUNCTION

Even in a multiverse of “countless” worlds, true conjunctions are extraordinarily rare. Regardless of whether the people of either plane have the ability to predict planar movements, the coming of a true conjunction makes itself felt on many levels. Seers and prophets foretell a time of great change, animals grow more and more uneasy, and people begin seeing strange visions and having dreams that deal with the coming planar event, even if they don't understand what they are seeing.

In the case of a true conjunction with Karlectash, about a year before it happens, a few prophets tell of a coming conflagration of fire and light that will reshape the world. Most likely, most people ignore these warnings, for the prophecies are not all that different than what doomsayers normally proclaim. An even smaller number of seers refute them, saying that something important is going to happen, but it will be the coming of a new age of wonder and goodness, not destruction.

A month before the event, about one person in 10 begins to dream of blue and purple energy storms in the sky or see common everyday objects and creatures (including family and friends) surrounded by a nimbus of bluish arcs of energy. As the month passes, these dreams become more common, and some people experience them as waking visions—they see some creatures and objects around them with halos of bluish lightning. At first, these dreams and visions may cause social upheaval. Those who appear to have auras of energy might find themselves attacked, imprisoned, or persecuted.



Objects seen with energy around them might be destroyed, as the ignorant look upon the visions as an insight into demonic possession.

About a week before the conjunction happens, people begin seeing streams of cascading energy, like blue and

purple lightning bolts stretching from the ground to the sky, or from one building to another, or between a tree and a cliff side.

These energy discharges do not seem to have any effect at first, but as the next few days pass, folks begin noticing that the bolts leave more and more of a burnt spot in whatever they touch—as if they are becoming less hallucination and more real. Eventually, reports start to come in from everywhere that creatures caught in these seemingly random discharges are hurt or slain. The discharges deal 5d6 points of electricity damage, Reflex save (DC 15) for half.

At this point, most cities erupt into bedlam. Panic-crazed mobs storm the castles,

palaces, and manor houses of their nobles and leaders demanding answers. More victims are lynched, believed to be evil sorcerers or demons at fault for these accusations. Animals panic in the wilderness, as well as in their pens and stalls. Tensions escalate between enemy states, who suspect that their foes are launching a magical attack. Tribes of orcs, gnolls, or even ogres, angered and afraid, storm into towns seeking retribution against those responsible. Mages everywhere barricade themselves in their towers as their neighbors place the blame for these strange events upon them. Wise dragons gird themselves in their lairs, possessed of a greater perspective and understanding for what is about to come.

Using Knowledge (the Planes)

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (the Planes) can predict the coming true conjunction with a skill check (DC 20), but only if they think to try. An ethereoscopic viewer (see Beyond Countless Doorways) makes this check succeed automatically. Knowledge of the coming conjunction is unavailable sooner than one year ahead of time, due to the random movements of Karlectash.

Knowing the true conjunction is coming and preparing for it are two different things. A second Knowledge (the Planes) check (DC 20) gives a character enough information about Karlectash to understand that protection from electricity will come in very handy.

Warning others and getting them to believe that a dangerous conjunction could really happen requires a Diplomacy check (DC 20), modified by the audience's familiarity with the planes. The more ignorant they are, the harder it will be to convince them and properly instruct them as to what should be done.

As to whether one can actually prevent the conjunction, that's up to the DM. It likely would require the act of a deity or deities or an extraordinarily powerful artifact.

THE EVENT

When the true conjunction happens, the energy that is the essence of Karlectash enters the adjacent plane. To the inhabitants of the world, it appears as if a wall of bluish-purple lightning stretching from the ground to the sky bears down upon them with great speed. A slight ozone smell, coupled with the odor of smoldering cinders, permeates everything. Nothing can escape the wall of energy, which—when it arrives—gives everything a bluish-purple hue.

At that point, all creatures and objects in the world suffer a jolt of energy. This energy has a random amount of power. For most, it is nothing more than a prickling sensation. One in 10 living creatures in the world must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 10). Those who fail suffer 2d6 points of electricity damage. This isn't likely to kill most people (except old, frail, or very young targets), but the sure death of so many animals, insects, and plants likely will prove very significant, particularly in the coming weeks and months. One in 100 living creatures in the world must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 15). Those who fail suffer 5d6 points of electricity damage.

The DM should also randomly assign damage to objects. A castle's wall might be blackened and scored in one spot, while a wooden house or two in a town might catch fire. Forest fires begin in isolated spots throughout the wilderness.

After this initial scourge, everything keeps its bluish glow, but no further damage occurs. In fact, every creature and object in the world gains electricity resistance 5. The next wave of changes is likely not experienced for a day or two.

MEANWHILE, IN KARLECTASH

Ironically, the influence of the material plane with which Karlectash comes into true conjunction makes the energy plane more hospitable. The plane gains a breathable atmosphere and a flat, groundlike surface with normal gravity upon which to walk. The surrounding energy—while present—inflicts only 1d6 points of electricity damage per round. The plane is still dangerous but, with the right magic, it's survivable.

WEAL OR WOE

Within 24 hours of the beginning of the true conjunction, the energy of Karlectash begins to interact with the material of the plane with which it is now temporarily fused. This has two very different results.

1. THE GOOD NEWS...

... is that the energy fuses with some objects, imbuing them with power. This happens approximately once in every 100-square-mile area, but in truth the DM gets to decide where it happens and to what objects. In some cases, it will be a stone on the ground or a still-living tree in the wilderness, where no one will ever notice it. In others, it will be an artificial object like a ring, a wagon wheel, or a spade. The vast majority of these affected objects now contain power that allows someone aware of the energy within them to release it as 1d4 *shocking grasp* spells cast at 20th level (treat as a regular magic item, requiring a touch attack to activate, with 1d4 uses). Once used, the object returns to its normal state.

Of the imbued objects, 1 percent have a more permanent and potent change that transforms them into a random magic item appropriate to their size and shape. One in 1,000 of the items so transformed might actually take on the power normally ascribed to an artifact.

This effect is interesting from the DM's point of view, because it is a way that magic items, even extraordinarily powerful ones, might end up in the hands of commoners or other creatures normally without any good reason to possess such an object. Imagine the stories that would spread of a simple quiet farmer who suddenly found that his hoe enabled him to raise the dead, the seamstress in the middle of the city who had a box that produced a near limitless amount of food, or a kobold in a cave who discovered a stone that allowed him to transform himself into a dragon.

The imbued objects normally do not change in appearance, but a *detect magic* spell reveals the presence of their newfound aura, as it would any magic item.

2. THE BAD NEWS...

...is that the energy alters some creatures (between Small and Huge size), transforming them into a new life form called a karlectar. Regardless of what type of creature it was prior to the effect—a goat, a boa constrictor, a griffon, an orc, or an elf—all karlectars are the same in appearance, size, and power. These near-mindless creatures thrive only on destruction. Nothing short of a *wish* can restore the karlectar to its original form and mind. Militias, as well as teams of brave heroes, are needed to deal with these threats, which appear randomly in towns, on farms, amid domesticated herds, and deep within wild woods and jungles. Even underwater.



KARLECTAR

Large Aberration

Hit Dice: 9d8+72 (112 hp)

Initiative: +4

Speed: 20 feet

Armor Class: 22 (−1 size, +9 natural, +4 deflection), touch 13, flat-footed 22

Base Attack/Grapple: +6/+15

Attack: Bite +10 melee (1d8+5 plus 2d6 electricity)

Full Attack: Bite +10 melee (1d8+5 plus 2d6 electricity)

Space/Reach: 10 feet/5 feet

(Face/Reach 10 feet by 5 feet/5 feet)

Special Attacks: Energy blast, chain energy blast

Special Qualities: Energy aura, blindsight 60 feet, immunity to electricity, damage reduction 5/magic (or 5/+1), spell resistance 14

Saves: Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +6

Abilities: Str 20, Dex 11, Con 26, Int 3, Wis 6, Cha 3

Skills: Listen +6, Spot +6

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes

Environment: Any

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 8

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always chaotic neutral

Advancement: N/A

Level Adjustment: —

Karlectars are a new creation in the multiverse, formed when the rogue plane of Karlectash came into true conjunction with a material plane inhabited by creatures. A small number of those creatures (a fraction of those whose sizes fall between Small and Huge, but obeying no other rules or preferences for selection) were forever transformed into

these hideous, sluglike monstrosities seething with strange alien energies.

The energy within the karlectar is the energy of karlectash, a power not unlike lightning, but not exactly lightning.

Sages and wizards would find the corpse of a karlectar very interesting from the point of view of academic study.

Likewise, they would welcome anyone who could deliver a

subdued live specimen or otherwise bring a living karlectar to a lab safely. Esoteric uses for karlectash energy may yet await discovery.

COMBAT

Seething with sparks, the karlectar inflicts energy damage when it bites a foe. With a lust for destruction, it attacks with abandon, having little regard for its own safety. Karlectars revel in their own power and use their energy blasts as often as possible, usually starting an encounter with a chain energy blast.

Energy Blast (Su):

Instead of making a physical attack, the karlectar can loose a blast of energy in a line up to 100 feet long that inflicts 6d6 points of electricity damage. A

Reflex save (DC 22) reduces the damage by half. The karlectar can use this ability once every 1d4 rounds. The saving throw is Constitution based.

Chain Energy Blast (Su): Once per day, the karlectar can use its energy blast ability to fire a blast identical to a *chain lightning* spell cast by an 11th-level sorcerer, using its Constitution score as the key ability (making the Reflex save DC 24).

Energy Aura (Su): A nimbus of crackling energy surrounds the karlectar at all times. It grants the creature a +4 deflection bonus to Armor Class. It also inflicts 2d6 points of electricity damage to anyone striking the creature, even if the attacker uses a weapon or object to do so (the energy

damage conducts to any creature who might be touching or somehow connected to the karlectar, such as by a rope). A Reflex save (DC 22) reduces the damage by half. Further, energy surges through the creature striking the karlectar to any other creature within 10 feet. It inflicts 1d6 points of electricity damage, also reduced by half on a successful Reflex save (DC 22). The saving throws are Constitution based.

THE AFTERMATH

After about one week of true conjunction, Karlectash metaphysically moves on, leaving destruction in its wake. The items of power and the karlectars created remain behind, but the energy glow that surrounds everything disappears, as does the resistance to electricity, making the karlectars even more dangerous than before.

Eventually the world returns to normal. Tales are told of the “lightning plague” or the “days of destruction,” and certainly they will grow with the telling. Truly, though, the conjunction’s impact on every creature and every society will be significant. Some will learn new respect for wizards and those that study esoterica. Others will fear them all the more. Many will look for a way to keep themselves safe, should this disaster ever happen again (although it will not).

Many will go hungry as one-tenth of the harvest was destroyed, as was one-tenth of the livestock. Large predators—unlikely to have been killed by the effects of the conjunction but dependent on the decimated populations of smaller creatures to live—will have to go farther afield for food. They might even be driven into populated settlements to forage. It will take years for the ecology to rebalance.

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