

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

Master Game Adventure

Five Coins For A Kingdom

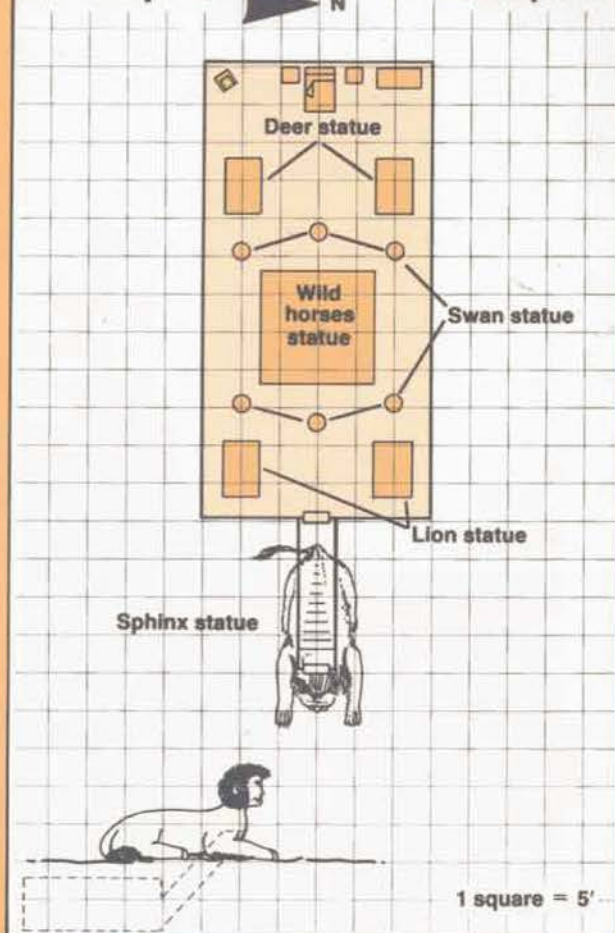
by Allen Varney



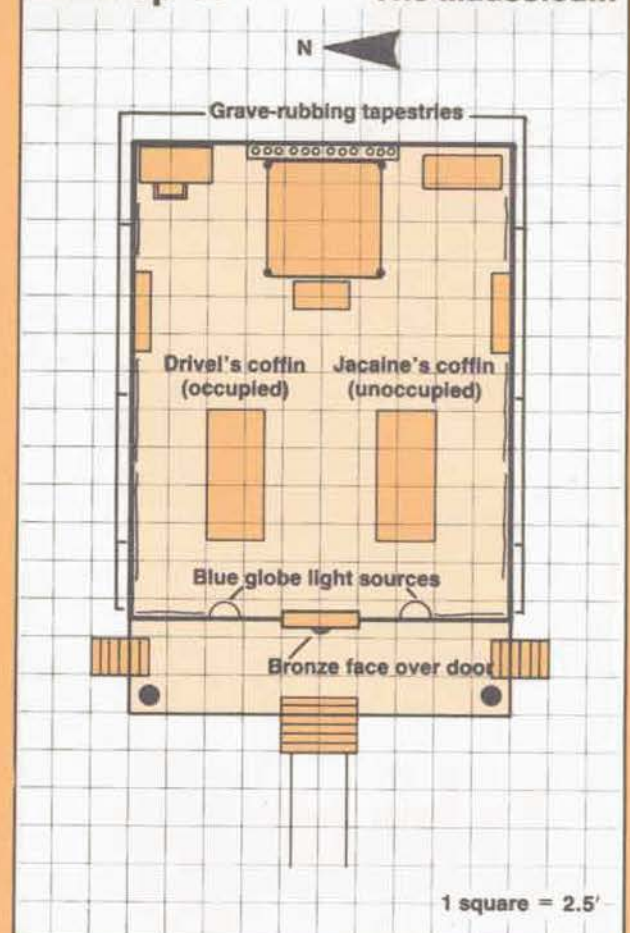
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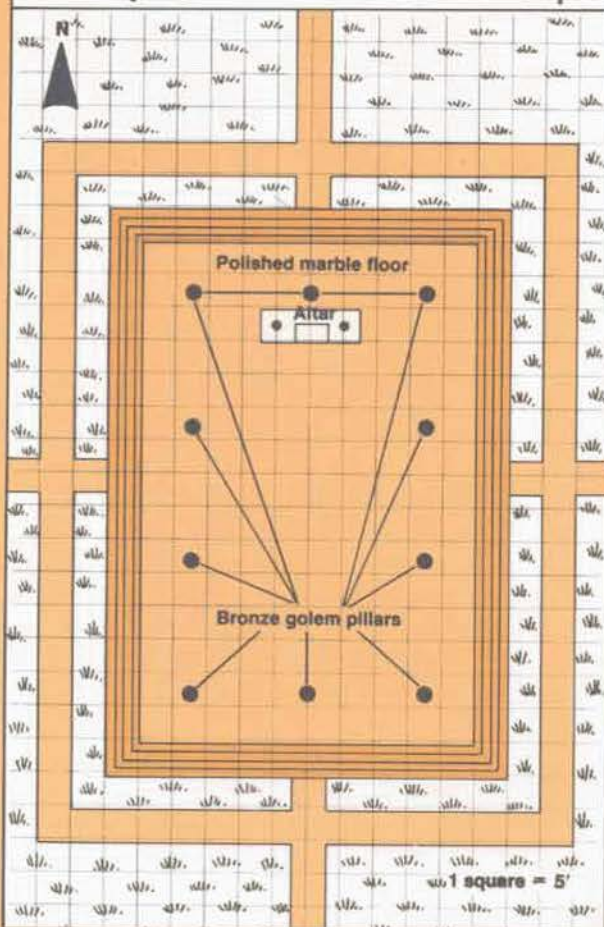
DM Map 10 The Sphinx



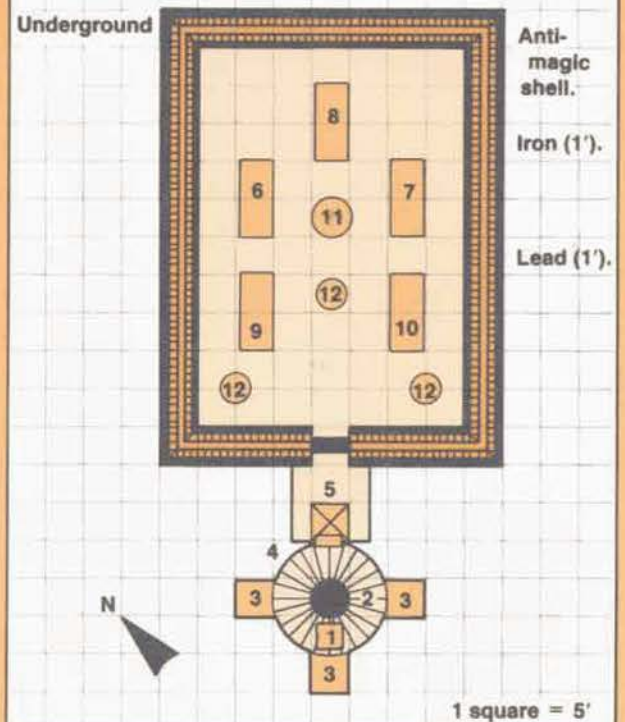
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Five Coins For A Kingdom

by Allen Varney



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INTRODUCTION

Five Coins For A Kingdom is a D&D® Master Set adventure for four to six players of levels 28 to 32. For the best results, the party should have at least a total of 150 levels between them. If this is the players' first experience with Master-level play, they can use the pre-rolled characters provided. To do so, pull out the center four pages of this module and cut apart the character sheets with scissors.

The players should be familiar with the rules for unarmed combat (listed in Set 3, *Players Companion*, p. 6) and weapon mastery (in Set 4, *Master Player's Book*, p. 15). They should also be familiar with travel between the planes of the Multiverse, and (optionally) the *War Machine* mass combat system.

Dungeon Master Background

The five Ruling Wizards in the outer plane of Eloysia governed their domain fairly. Their kingdom, Trann, was a land of great accomplishments; their crowning glory, the capital city of Solius. Its cloud-capped towers, floating highways, and stately avenues made life pleasant and productive.

Old beyond memory, the five powerful Wizards maintained their vigor through diligent research into the most profound mysteries of magic. Their curiosity produced wonderful benefits for all citizens of Trann.

Trann drew the envy of other kingdoms in Eloysia — especially Volde, the land of Durhan the Conqueror. Working devious magics through traitors close to the Wizards, Durhan subverted their power and left the Wizards defenseless. Then, to prevent their allies from rescuing the captive Wizards, Durhan caused the entire city of Solius to vanish — and, for good measure, sent the site of the city flying into the sun!

No one knows how Durhan has managed to marshal such tremendous power, but it's clear that, with the Wizards gone, the kingdom of Trann will soon fall to Volde's invaders.

Before sending their city plunging toward destruction, Durhan imprisoned the Ruling Wizards in the Royal Treasury, the least accessible chamber of the central city. Imprisoned, without allies, and without any materials with which to work their enchantments, the Ruling Wizards were rendered helpless by Durhan. Without their interference, Durhan would see to the destruction of Solius, and the entire realm of Trann.

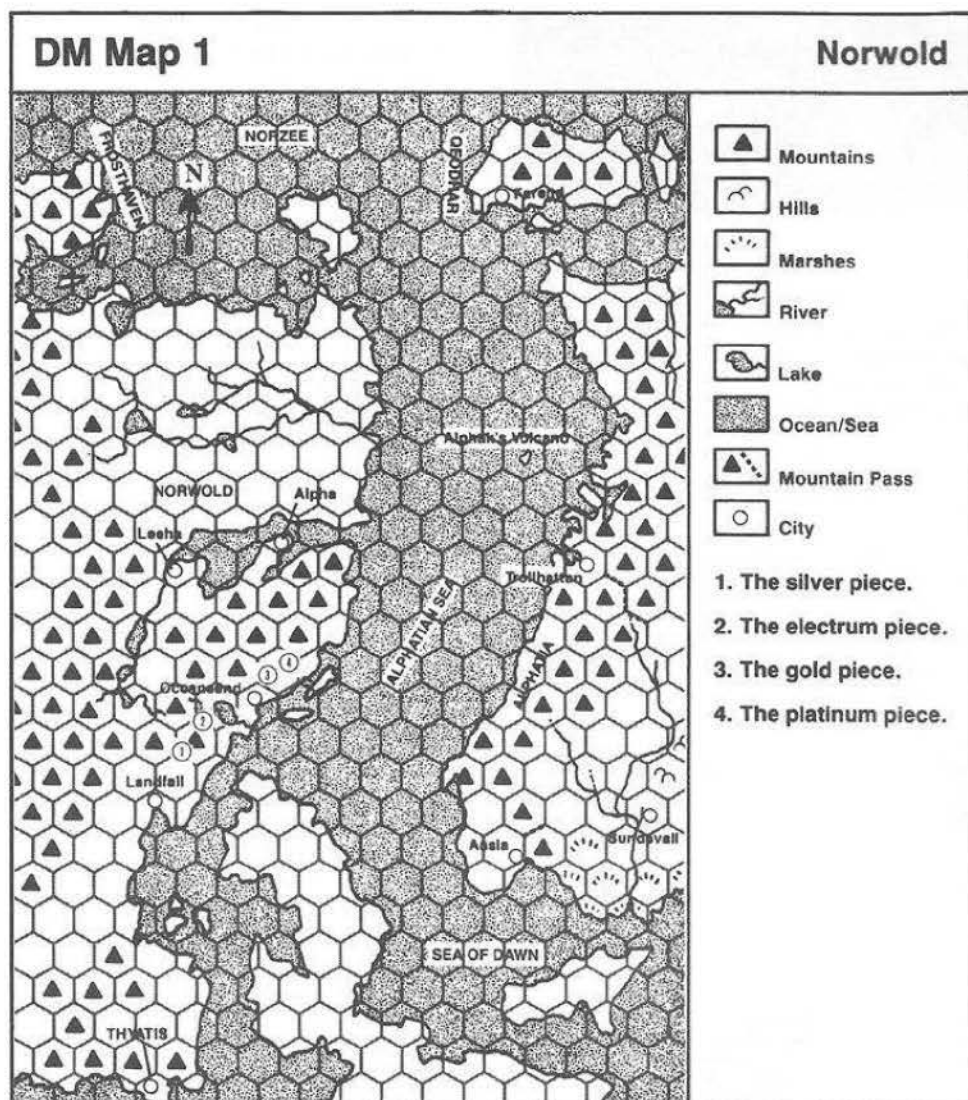
Adventure Synopsis

Durhan didn't understand the might of the Ruling Wizards. Even reduced to a fraction of their former power, the Wizards had the ability and the opportunity to work a final spell seeking aid from another plane.

In this adventure, the Ruling Wizards enlist the PCs' aid in freeing Trann from the vile Durhan. Prevented from working their magic directly, the Ruling Wizards imparted much of their energy to five coins — the only working materials at hand in the treasure vault — and sent the coins to the Prime Plane. They hope the coins will fall to potential allies, who can then cross to Eloysia and free the Wizards.

Each Wizard has enchanted one coin. Each coin has a unique magical power which may help its owner during the adventure. However, some personality traits of the Wizards were imbued in the coins along with their powers; the holders of the coins behave in curious ways, which provides a role-playing opportunity for the players.

There is one complication, though: The original spell Durhan used to destroy Solius has gone out of control. The spell has run unchecked toward the Prime Plane. The PCs' own city of Lighthall begins to vanish as this adventure begins; they must act quickly to rescue the Ruling Wizards so both cities can be saved from destruction.



Chapter 1: A CITY VANISHES

Encounter Setting

In this opening section, the PCs are resting in Lighthall between adventures. Without warning, they find the city — its structures and inhabitants — gradually fading from view, leaving the first of the magic coins as the only reminder of its existence. It is at this point that the adventure begins.

The PCs are witnessing two enchantments. Durhan cast the first spell to suspend the city of Solius in another dimension. The enchantment worked all too well: it has continued uncontrolled to the Prime Plane and has caused the events of this opening scene.

The second enchantment was cast by the Ruling Wizards to send the coins to enlist the aid of adventurers. Though unrelated to the first, this second enchantment has made its way to the Prime Plane at the same time as the first great spell.

As DM, it is essential to the adventure's success to present the initial problem in an interesting light and motivate the players to investigate it. Emphasize the liveliness and vitality of the city, and then its eerie, gradual disappearance. If the players' initial helplessness to stop the disaster is stressed, they'll be that much more eager to find a way to forestall the disaster.

The DM is encouraged to provide his own campaign city to serve as the backdrop for the opening scene; this can be any PC's home base, a seat of government, or the site of the conclusion of their last adventure. Try to use a city one or more of the PCs cares deeply about; otherwise, the site is basically unimportant. A range of cliffs or mountains and a lake or ocean should be near the city. If the players use the pregenerated PCs provided with this adventure, the city is Lighthall, the dominion of Sir Theobald Redbeard. Lighthall, so named for its well-lit stronghold, is situated on the coast of Norwold, about halfway between the cities of Landfall and Oceansend.

Encounter Key

1. A Busy Day

It's a hot summer day, but that hasn't stopped people from turning out in the marketplace of the city. Crowds mill around in the bazaar while merchants hawk their goods and entertainers play for a few copper pieces. The smells of fried food and perspiration are in the air. Chil-

dren run through the crowd, shouting, sometimes for fun, at other times to escape a pursuing victim whose purse has been lightened.

Anyone looking for something to buy?

Allow the PCs to buy what they wish and have fun bargaining for supplies or weapons. Improvise merchants and haggling as much as is desired. Let the players introduce their characters to one another, if they don't already know each other. Give everyone a chance to role-play. Then continue reading:

Suddenly, you hear a high-pitched whine in the distance, growing louder. Before you can move, the sound becomes deafening, and a light like a fireball streaks across the sky. Street musicians stop playing and merchants stop haggling. People begin shouting in panic. From every direction, you hear cries of "What's that?" or "Run!"

Something rushes along a distant street — you can barely make out a glowing trail where it crosses a busy intersection. The thing rushes the other way, now one street closer — then back again, a block nearer. All the while, the roaring gets louder. People are screaming. Crowds scramble to run away before the thing gets closer.

Ask the players if they want to do anything. They may try to keep order, run away themselves, run toward the light, or simply wait and watch. There is time to draw a weapon or to cast a low-level spell. Whatever the PCs decide makes no matter; their actions at this point are not important (don't tell them this, though). After they've done what they want to, read the following:

You have time to draw a breath — almost — before the thing roars into the marketplace. The object is a tiny, extremely bright light zipping along at eye level; the roar gets louder as it comes nearer. The light streaks past, dodging past carts, booths, and people. Suddenly, the roaring stops.

The light continues, but everything is silent in its wake. People open their mouths to scream, but you hear nothing. People run, but you can't hear their footsteps. The light zips off down a side street and disappears from sight.

As before, let the PCs act if they wish. Noth-

ing they do, no spell they cast, can break the silence. Likewise, nothing can catch the racing light. The PCs are, however, immune to all the lights that flash through in the next section — for all the good this will do them.

Another light races by in a new direction, passing inches from your heads. As the light vanishes down a crossing street, you begin to sense a subtle change in your surroundings — a change which is difficult to put your finger on.

Have the players make ability checks against their Wisdom scores. Successful PCs notice that the familiar smells of the city — meats and vegetables in the marketplace, perspiration from sweaty customers — have vanished. In their place is the sweet scent of grassland.

In quick succession come more lights. One sweeps by over someone's head, dips down to pass between another's legs, circles a cart almost too fast to see, and zooms away in a new direction. Slowly, the people around you become transparent: their hands pass through each other's bodies, through the wooden posts of the booths, and into building walls. People still scream in total silence and run through each other like ghosts.

Another light comes blazing straight through everything like a comet. After it passes, you discover that everything around you has stopped moving. The shoppers in the market are frozen in place like statues. The light has gone off in still another direction.

Again, the PCs are completely unaffected by the lights. Nevertheless, the DM should try to unnerve the PCs. Everything they try is futile, although clever ideas should be rewarded with additional experience points at the end of the gaming session.

Give the players a round or two to look, investigate, experiment, wander around, or otherwise occupy themselves. But before they get anything elaborate underway, read the following aloud:

You're distracted by a bright light shining directly overhead. Something is streaking down at you, but you can't tell where it comes from. The light is identical to the other light — except for the fact that this one is big and grows bigger as you watch.

Chapter 1: A CITY VANISHES

The light seems to cover the whole city like a dome. It spreads downward from above, surrounding everything and growing brighter all the time. Soon, you are unable to see anything but pure white. Then, as suddenly as it appeared, the light is gone.

With the light's disappearance, the entire city has vanished. Presently, you're standing in the middle of a grassy field where the city stood only moments ago. To all appearances, you haven't moved — the city has. It has disappeared.

Again, allow the players a round or two to investigate. Let them confirm that the city has gone away, has vanished irretrievably.

The field the PCs are standing in is quite ordinary, essentially what must have been here before people came and built the city. The only significant difference is the utter lack of animal life: there are no birds, insects, or wandering monsters in sight. The DM may tell the players about this directly or call for ability checks against Intelligence to let the characters discover this fact.

2. The Entreaty

Another sound, a loud humming, comes from somewhere overhead. Gradually, it grows in volume, until it becomes a sweet-sounding, musical chord. Looking up, you see more streaks of white light; two head off toward a range of cliffs nearby, while two more head off toward the sea. The fifth and last light streaks directly toward you like a fireball.

The ball of light hits the ground less than 10' away. There's an explosion which throws dirt into the air, but no one in your party is hurt. A ring of tall grass around the point of impact catches fire; for a moment you see nothing but a cloud of smoke. Gradually, the smoke clears.

Standing before you is an old man in copper-colored robes, outlined in transparent flames. The image shimmers slightly and is transparent.

The image speaks in an old, fragile voice. "I hope this token has found brave adventurers. I bring greetings from another plane. We, the Ruling Wizards of the kingdom of Trann, are in great danger. You, too, may be in the same danger.

"Our capital city, Solius — the jewel, the quintessence of our land of Trann — has vanished. The ruler of a rival nation, Durhan the Conqueror, cast this powerful enchantment: it leaves our land helpless before his invading armies. But we sense Durhan's spell has spread far beyond his control, crossing the barrier between the planes of existence, finding its way to your Prime Plane.

"We have been betrayed by an ally of Durhan's and are now held captive beneath the site of our vanished city. Our magic has been restrained in our own plane of existence, but we have marshalled our forces to cross the planes. We send tokens of our power to you, our rescuers from another realm. Five coins are all we had to work with. I hope their powers will aid you in your quest.

"We beg you to help us. Obtain the coins and you obtain the means for reaching us; obtain the coins and you prove yourselves worthy to face Durhan. Rescue us, defeat Durhan, and we can restore our cities to their natural states. Our welfare depends upon your strength and courage."

With that, the old man points downward to a spot at his feet and slowly fades away.

The Copper Coin

The PCs find a small copper coin at the bottom of the foot-deep hole it gouged in the earth (the spot the Wizard pointed out).

Although the ground is still smoking, the coin is cool to the touch.

Give the players the cut-out copper coin from the module screen or read the following description:

At the bottom of the hole is a copper piece about an inch in diameter. One face of the coin shows an elderly, bearded man with a wise expression — the same man as in the image. On the reverse side is a picture of a castle, which is underscored by a motto in a language you cannot understand. The coin radiates a magical aura.

This last note probably comes as no surprise to anyone. The coin is one of the five magical coins made by the Ruling Wizards. It resembles the others, which are described at the beginning of the next chapter. The PCs may use magic to read the motto: "Touch the cosmos" is what it says.

The unique power provided by this coin may be used by any PC who holds it. To its holder, the coin imbues the ability to locate the other coins and provides information regarding their powers. This copper coin works as a DM's tool to provide background information, guide the PCs to the adventure's sites, and perhaps drop a clue now and then if the players need help.

The man on the coin is Warrick, the most mystical of the Ruling Wizards. He is renowned in Eloysia for his wide knowledge of worldly affairs and for his affinity for *wishes*. Although this coin does not grant *wishes*, it can tell its holder the location of the other coins (with great precision). The holder is aware of this power as soon as the coin is touched.

Warrick is attuned to the rhythms of his entire plane and is prone to a highly spiritual awareness. The PC who holds his coin should behave the same way. The player has an ideal opportunity to show the others in the party how to meditate and achieve inner serenity.

Chapter 2: HARD WORK FOR SMALL PAY

Encounter Setting

In this section of the adventure, the PCs must try to retrieve the four other magical coins. These coins are spread all over the landscape surrounding the site of the vanished city. Encounters 1 and 2 take place in the foothills or in the mountains; Encounters 3 and 4 occur at a nearby lake or similar body of freshwater.

With the locating power of the copper coin already in their possession, the PCs can track down the others in almost any order the DM likes. Obtaining the coins is another matter.

The coins have been sent to the lairs of several monsters in the outlying area. These monsters were protected from Durhan's vanishing act (the only action other than the enchantment and transportation of the coins the Ruling Wizards' were able to perform). They are a test for the most powerful adventurers. What's more, the monsters holding the coins are living clues to the locations that must be visited in the realm of Eloysia — and to the methods used there in freeing the Wizards (these are fully discussed in Chapter 3).

More About the Coins

The coins have several things in common: To begin with, they all radiate magic; they also have a wizard's face on one side and a message and picture on the other. For the most part, these tokens closely resemble coins from the Classical Era or the Middle Ages.

Each coin has a unique magical power which any character holding the coin may use, regardless of class. Knowledge of the power's uses and limitations is given to the holder as soon as the coin is touched.

Each coin is made of a different metal: in addition to the copper piece, there is a silver, electrum, gold, and platinum piece. Each coin shows the face of a different Wizard and each inspires a different attitude or behavior in the PC who carries it. The coins are described in the individual sections following each encounter.

Cut out the coins from the gatefold of the module screen and give them to the players as their characters find them. If cutting up the module is unacceptable or if someone's already beaten you to it, the coin sections include descriptions to read aloud to the players. As a staging device, the DM may use real coins in place of the cut-outs. In this case, give the players a penny when they get the copper piece, a nickel when they find the silver piece, a dime when they find the gold piece, a quarter when they find the electrum

piece, and a half-dollar for the platinum piece. British players, of course, will use equivalent pence pieces.

The Coins and the Characters

Any PC may hold and use any one coin. Characters who try to carry more than one coin at a time, however, find that the coins dramatically repel from each other (like the north and south poles of a magnet) and that their powers are temporarily neutralized. (If there are fewer than five characters in the adventure, bend this rule to allow all the coins to be used — but make sure every character gets at least one coin.)

Each coin has been imprinted with the personality of the Ruling Wizard who enchanted it. This personality exhibits itself in a character who holds or carries it for more than a minute or two. The character actually begins to behave as the Wizard would, becoming cheerful, proud, or gloomy as listed in the coin's description.

Note that the PC holding the coin does *not* get the Wizard's powers. The only power transferred to the PC is the coin's single magical power. The behavioral change is provided as a chance for the players to involve themselves in some fun role-playing.

When a PC gets a coin, take the player aside, explain the behavioral change, and encourage the player to act out the new persona as the adventure continues. If necessary, offer to reward the player with extra experience points if the character's change in outlook is played well. Conversely, the DM may lower a player's XP award if he completely ignores the character change.

None of the creatures encountered here or in the next section have any treasure — it has all been spirited away along with the city! The DM may wish to figure the treasure that would ordinarily be found in these lairs, however, since the PCs may return and claim it after completing their mission. As an option, the DM can upgrade the final treasure hoard according to how well the players completed this chapter (see Chapter 4 for details).

Because the countryside has been cleared of almost all inhabitants by Durhan's spell, there are no random encounters in this section of the adventure. However, some optional events are provided at the end of the chapter.

Encounter Key

1. The Silver Piece

This section of cliffside is littered with rubble and huge boulders. It looks like there's been a great battle here. In the midst of this carnage, you see the victim of that battle: a huge mountain giant, badly wounded and almost unconscious. The giant breathes slowly, each breath resounding like an echo in a cavern. The giant is wearing several layers of torn and bloodied leather armor. A shield as big as a horse lies nearby, beaten so badly that it lies in useless shards. The crest on the shield shows a dragon's head impaled on a spear. You see no accompanying weapon.

The giant is deeply tanned. His long, brown hair is wet with blood and perspiration, as is the remainder of his beard. The rest of the beard has been torn out; 2'-long hairs are scattered around the battlefield.

The giant lies across a shallow depression in the cliffside, completely covering it with his body. The copper coin informs its holder that the coin you're looking for is somewhere behind the giant.

The PCs can kill the giant easily; he's down to 5 hp (from 56) and can barely move (treat as AC 8). By doing so, though, the PCs will receive no XP. Furthermore, they'll have to figure out how to move or bypass the enormous body in order to follow the trail.

If the players decide to heal the giant or if they attend to his wounds, he revives gradually and expresses his gratitude. He moves aside as soon as he's caught his breath. The giant is notably reticent, but some questioning reveals the following information.

The giant is a mercenary named Granite. He knows nothing of the coin or the vanished city; he was hired by a distant kingdom to slay Dominagon the Blue, a huge dragon who stole a sizeable portion of a powerful noble's wealth. The dragon's trail led Granite here; the PCs have seen evidence of the battle's outcome. According to Granite, the blue dragon has retreated into its cavernous lair in the cliffside, taking the silver coin and Granite's magical sword with it. The "depression" in which Granite lies is *hallucinatory terrain*, which was cast by the dragon to conceal its lair.

Granite is grateful for any services rendered to him by the PCs. If healed to more than half his original hp, the giant is eager to accompany the party in their quest to find the

Chapter 2: HARD WORK FOR SMALL PAY

silver coin.

If the PCs help Granite, he tells them of the dragon's illusion. If they don't help him, the PCs must figure this out on their own by using the locating power of the copper coin.

Granite: AC 0; HD 16*; hp 56; AT 1; D 5-50; MV 150'(50'); Save F16; AL N; THAC0 7.

Once inside the cavern, Granite (if he's with the PCs) insists on taking the lead along the wide, lightning-scorched passage to the dragon's lair. The long, winding tunnel never branches. Now and then the characters hear

Dominagon's furious roars of rage: the dragon has discovered that all its treasure has vanished!

The party comes upon a tight bend leading to the left, but the copper coin indicates that the silver coin is somewhere to the right.

This is another *hallucinatory terrain* illusion. The tunnel actually opens to the right, into Dominagon's lair; proceeding to the left leads the unwary victims to a large pile of bones (both animal and human). Careless PCs walk directly into the pile unless they are carrying a torch or have special vision. The clatter of the bones alerts Dominagon to intruders, giv-

ing the dragon a round to prepare its defenses.

After the PCs have discovered the illusion (or the bones), read the following aloud:

The illusion vanishes; in place of the tunnel, you see a pile of bones. The illusionary wall to the right also fades, leaving you at the entrance to the dragon's lair.

Dominagon the Blue dwells in a large, dark cavern that is empty of treasure. The cave is hot and reeks of ozone. The only object you see is an enormous sword with a dulled and pitted steel blade that is nearly 8' long. The sword is stuck point down in the rock floor.

Something else catches your attention: A single silver coin. The coin lies beyond the sword, between the brilliant, blue claws of Dominagon the dragon. Dominagon stares at you with a fiery glare in his eyes. Now and then, yellow sparks flare from his snout. The dragon opens its mouth slowly. "What have you done with all my treasure?" he bellows.

The sword (+2 vs. dragons) belongs to Granite; the weapon is far too heavy for anyone but him to wield. Before anyone can reach the sword, the dragon breathes *lightning* at the blade. This magically "charges" the weapon so that anyone who tries to approach or pass the sword is immediately hit by a bolt of *lightning* (4d6 damage). The sword discharges in five uses. The DM may give characters a chance to dodge the bolt by giving them a roll against one-half their Dexterity.

Dominagon is barricaded in what looks like a dead-end cleft in the rock wall beyond the sword. It is impossible to get to the alcove without going past the sword, nor around or behind it without going through solid rock.

Dominagon is furious over the theft of his treasure; furthermore, he believes the PCs are to blame. The dragon does not attack without provocation. Unfortunately, Dominagon is easily provoked.

The PCs can try talking to the dragon. If Granite is with the party, though, diplomacy is impossible. Talking with Dominagon makes the giant restive; he can't believe his rescuers are restraining themselves from slaughtering this evil creature! As a result, Granite's frustration builds until the following action occurs at some delicate point:

The giant lunges for the sword. Lightning plays all around him as he grabs it. Roar-



ing with pain, his limbs twitching from the shock, Granite wrests the sword from the floor and leaps to attack the dragon. Swinging the massive blade high overhead, Granite strikes the dragon squarely as its shiny blue claws rake across his chest. The giant sags to the floor as Dominagon rears back to crush him with both claws.

Heroic PCs may leap to defend their companion (who's been taken back down to 5 hp all over again) or they might just stand by and allow Granite to die. Either way, the dragon has been hurt badly (reduced to half his hp total). The eventual fight with Dominagon has thus become that much easier for the PCs.

The only way to get the silver coin from Dominagon is to take it. Since the dragon is greatly disturbed by the loss of its hoard, it is unwilling to part with even one more coin — especially a magical one.

Dominagon: AC -4; HD 18****; hp 100; AT 6; D 3d10 + 8(x2)/1d10 + 3(x4); MV 150'(50')/360'(120'); Save F36; AL N; THAC0 5; AL C; SA (see p. 30, *DM's Companion: Book Two*); SD (see SA).

Spells:

First level: *charm person*, *magic missile*, *read magic*, *shield*, and *sleep*.

Second level: *ESP*, *invisibility*, *locate object*, *phantasmal force*, and *web*.

Third level: *dispel magic*, *fire ball*, *hold person*, *lightning bolt*, and *protection from normal missiles*.

Fourth level: *confusion*, *dimension door*, *hallucinatory terrain*, and *polymorph self*.

If Granite isn't with the party, the PCs may continue the diplomatic approach. In this event, Dominagon demands an obscene price for the coin (upwards of 200,000 gp). This price should be out of the party's range, forcing them to resort to a different tactic. If the PCs offer the Dominagon any or all of their magical items, the dragon will accept them. Still, he will not part with the coin. Consequently, killing or subduing the dragon is the only course for retrieving the silver coin.

Of course, Dominagon didn't get to be huge through foolish actions. Once the dragon realizes the party's determination (as soon as the PCs begin preparing high-level spells or reaching for weapons), it withdraws with the coin into the cleft and escapes

through the far room of its lair. The roof of this small chamber has collapsed, leaving it open to the air.

Before the pursuers reach the chamber, Dominagon casts a *dimension door* which appears beyond a grove of trees 200' away. There, within sight of the chamber opening, the dragon casts a *phantasmal force* of itself flying away in the opposite direction. If the players fall for this, they've lost the silver coin — at least for the time being. (Dominagon must eventually return home.)

Whatever the outcome, Granite refuses to go with the PCs on their mission. The giant must track Dominagon down, finish the job, and return with the dragon's head in order to receive payment. If Dominagon is still at large, the giant discourages the PCs from helping him find the dragon. "You got important stuff to do," he says.

The Coin

Give the silver cut-out coin to the players when their characters defeat the dragon. If you don't want to use the cut-out, read the following description aloud:

The coin is a small, finely crafted silver piece. On one side is the profile of a young man with a high forehead, a noble nose and chin, a full head of hair, and a faint smile. On the reverse is a dragon. Its proportions make it look very young, almost babylike.

The silver piece gives its holder the ability to shape change. The holder may *polymorph* himself (as per the magic-user spell) three times a day for up to an hour each time. The shape assumed can be smaller or lighter, but not larger or heavier than the PC's original size. The PC does not acquire any special abilities of the new shape except natural ones; for instance, if the PC becomes a crow, he can fly. But if he becomes a gorgon, he cannot turn anyone to stone.

This coin was created by the wizard Saybrook, a burly and boisterous fellow whose great energy and aggressive manner belie his enormous achievements in the study of magic. The PC who carries Saybrook's coin becomes high-spirited, boastful, and ready to challenge any questioning of his abilities.

The youthful dragon is Saybrook's familiar, Popiel. The PCs will meet this creature later in the adventure.

2. The Electrum Piece

You are led by the gold coin to a low cliff with scrub trees at its base. About 20' up is the mouth of a cave, which is prefaced by a wide ledge. The carcass of a deer hangs over the lip of the ledge. Below, patches of fur hang from tree branches, along with a few large, brown feathers. Inside the cave you hear a low, gruff voice reciting what sounds like a nursery rhyme.

This is the small lair of a mated pair of sphinxes and their two cubs. The male plays with the cubs just inside the cave, while the female looks on. One of the cubs is toying with a large electrum coin. There is no visible treasure in the lair apart from the coin.

When they see the PCs, both sphinxes spring to defend their cubs. The male, a large creature named Demosthenes, growls threateningly, while the female (named Neria) herds the cubs to the back of the small cavern. If either parent is attacked, the male roars (PCs must save at -4 against *fear* and possible stun or damage), the female casts a *barrier* across the cavern entrance, and both sphinxes fight to the death (no morale checks). If the PCs are polite, make no aggressive moves, and stay away from the cubs, the sphinxes eventually calm down.

The sphinxes have no particular use for the electrum coin, but Demosthenes isn't going to give it away freely. Since he's somewhat worried about immediate survival now that all the live game has vanished, he may offer to trade the coin for fresh meat (which the PCs can't get) or long-term protection (which they can't offer). Nevertheless, the PCs should be allowed to bargain at length, even if the end results have been predetermined.

Actually, the preliminary bargaining is just a feint; when he feels comfortable with the PCs, Demosthenes offers to give them the coin, provided they can solve the following riddle:

A maiden walks on a hillside of white flowers. She lifts a black veil to show her face, then lowers it again. Who is the maiden?

The riddle's answer: The maiden is the Moon and the hillside is the night sky; the flowers are stars. The veil lifting and lowering represents the phases of the Moon.

If the players don't guess the riddle, the DM can have the PCs make ability checks against their Intelligence scores. A successful

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roll means the PCs solved the riddle. As an option, Demosthenes can challenge the PCs to ask him a riddle in reply. If the riddle is good, Demosthenes gives the PCs the coin.

If nothing works, Demosthenes keeps the coin, and the PCs must fight to get it. If the parents are killed and a PC enters the cave, the two cubs run away with the coin through a small escape tunnel at the back of the cavern, emerging at the base of the cliff. The cubs are too small to fly, but move overland at 120' (40'). The young sphinxes are unable to roar or do damage. Consequently, killing the cubs is unnecessary. A PC who kills the cubs anyway should not gain XP for the action.

Sphinx (Male): AC 0; HD 12****; hp 65; AT 3; D 3-18 (x2)/2-16; MV 180'(60')/360'(120'); Save F24; AL N; THAC0 8; SA magic-user spell use.

Spells:

First level: *charm person*, *light*, *magic missile*, and *shield*.

Second level: *detect invisible*, *invisibility*, *mirror image*, and *web*.

Third level: *fire ball*, *haste*, *hold person*, and *protection from normal missiles*.

Fourth level: *confusion*, *dimension door*, and *wall of fire*.

Fifth level: *cloudkill* and *wall of stone*.

Sixth level: *death spell*.

Sphinx (Female): AC 0; HD 12****; hp 60; AT 3; D 3-18 (x2)/2-16; MV 180'(60')/360'(120'); Save F24; AL N; THAC0 9; SA clerical spell use.

Spells:

First level: *cure light wounds*, *light*, *protection from evil*, and *remove fear*.

Second level: *hold person*, *know alignment*, *resist fire*, and *speak with animals*.

Third level: *cure disease*, *locate object*, *remove curse*, and *striking*.

Fourth level: *create water*, *cure serious wounds*, and *dispel magic*.

Fifth level: *dispel evil* and *raise dead*.

Sixth level: *word of recall*.

It should be easy to obtain the electrum coin without bloodshed. Neither sphinx joins the party on their adventure; however, Demosthenes may grow expansive and "favor" the party with lots of advice. Take care that none of this advice is useful!

The Coin

As before, give the players the electrum

(brass-colored) cut-out coin or read the following aloud:

This is a large electrum coin of excellent craftsmanship. On one side is a picture of an elderly woman. Her eyes are alert and her chin is held high. Her hair is tied back in a tight knot. The reverse side shows the outline of a city and a motto in a language you cannot understand.

The city is Solius, and the motto reads "Nothing is what it seems." The holder of the electrum coin may cast a number of realistic mental illusions — phantom images that appear real to all the senses of the viewer. A viewer must roll successfully against his Intelligence to determine that what he sees is illusory. No illusion may be larger than the PC and no illusion has any effect on real things.

The number of illusions depends on the number of viewers: The coin can deceive any given individual once per day with one illusion. The caster can specify which person or monster in a group sees what illusion. For example, the holder may dictate that a bandit leader sees an approaching sheriff, but other bandits in the group could see something different — a fleeing cat, dusk, or a tuba. The holder always sees and controls all the illusions his victims see.

The electrum coin was created by Kendall, the oldest and craftiest of the Ruling Wizards. Though absolutely moral, Kendall has no qualms about puncturing a rival's pretensions with a harmless prank. She promotes an amused skepticism toward any overly serious endeavor. Basically, Kendall is a gadfly; the PC who holds her coin should behave likewise.

3. The Gold Piece

DM's Note: This encounter is linked to the next one. Do not run the other encounter first.

Months ago, a diver used a *potion of water-breathing* to dive to the bottom of a large lake in hopes of finding sunken treasure. The diver found a chest of coins, but before he could retrieve it, he was seized by a school of devil-fish. Tormented by their evil enchantments, the diver soon died. His ghost lingers above the surface of the lake, though, and continues to haunt the body of water.

Still fascinated by gold, the haunt has seized the enchanted gold coin that landed near the lake. The PCs may have poor luck in gaining the coin the first time they encounter the ghost. But if they find and bury the diver's body in the next encounter, they can return here and appease the ghost in return for the coin.

You find yourself before a large, stagnant lake. A few reeds poke up through the mossy surface, but all the mosquitoes and pond life have vanished. The only sign of movement is a slight shimmering just above the water, about 20' out from shore.

The shimmering forms into a ghostly image. You see a pale man, dripping wet, wearing nothing but a loincloth; he is wrapped in seaweed and bleeds from a dozen wounds. The man carries a small wooden casket under one arm. His eyes are haunted and his blue lips mouth the words, "All my wealth for a breath of air."

If a cleric tries to Turn or destroy this shade, roll for its saving throw in secret; whatever the result, the ghost is unaffected. The ghost must remain long enough, however, to give important information.

The wooden chest the ghost holds is empty; its contents vanished with the city. The only item left in the ghost's possession is the coin. The chest's lock is corroded shut, but the rotten wood is flimsy enough to break easily.

The ghost may be persuaded to help the PCs, if they make a solemn promise to "give him air." (Remember that the ghost is unable to speak; his only means of communication is by mouthing words.) If necessary, tell the PCs that the ghost wants them to bury his body on land. The ghost also mouths the words "coral," "manta ray," and "danger," and points into the water with one dripping, emaciated finger.

If the PCs attack the ghost, it flees to the Ethereal Plane, taking the coin with it. If this happens, the PC do not receive another chance to get the coin until the ghost returns — after they engage in the next encounter.

Ghost: AC -2; HD 14****; hp 80; AT 2; D aging/paralysis; MV 90'(30'); Save special; AL N; THAC0 8; SA (see p. 33, *DM's Companion: Book Two*); SD (see SA).

The Coin

If you don't have the cut-out gold coin to give to your players, read the following aloud:

This gold coin is slightly tarnished, but well-made. The portrait side shows a balding man with plump cheeks, heavy-lidded eyes, and a gloomy expression. On the reverse is a stately building that resembles a crypt and a motto in a language you cannot understand.

The crypt on the coin is Jacaine's dwelling, a mausoleum in Solius (the PCs will encounter it when they travel to Eloysia). The motto reads "Value your time."

The holder of the gold coin gains the power to create magic potions. Three times per day, the coin can be touched to or dropped into a small quantity of liquid. The liquid is instantly transmuted into a potion of the holder's choice. Just one dosage of potion is created; larger quantities of water merely dilute the effects.

The gold coin was created by the powerful Wizard Jacaine, the gloomiest of the Ruling Wizards. Morbidly obsessed with death (he has been frustrated so far in his long quest for immortality), Jacaine sometimes gives way to fatalistic doomsaying. The player who holds this coin should do likewise.

4. The Platinum Piece

DM's Note: Make sure the players have already met the ghost from the previous encounter before running this one.

The water of this lake is stagnant and smells foul. The coin the PCs are looking for lies underwater — deep underwater, according to the copper coin. Read the following section aloud when the PCs enter the lake:

The water is foul and muddy. You see a few stunted plants and rocks covered with scum. The trail to the coin takes you deeper, and the light from above grows fainter. As you descend into the gloom, you see what looks like a large coral reef and some flat, disk-like shapes gliding toward it along the bottom. Each shape is black, except for two dim red eyes at the front. Each has a long tail.

These are devilfish. The DM can describe them as manta rays (from Set 3) if the PCs would be more familiar with this exotic ocean creature. If the players seem concerned over the existence of a coral reef in a body of freshwater, tell them that the reef emanates a mild glow of magic. In actuality, the devilfish clerics have built the reef over the centuries.

The devilfish were prevented from vanishing by the Ruling Wizards' magic, just as all the other monsters protecting the coins were.

The coin's trail leads to the reef. The PCs can also follow the evil fish to the reef, but at this depth, darkness is all-encompassing. Unless the PCs have a light source, assess the usual penalties for seeing and moving in darkness. The devilfish are not penalized.

The devilfish should reach the reef before

the PCs can attack. If the PCs take up pursuit, read the following:

The coral reef is hollowed out here to form an oval chamber, open at the wide end and very dark toward the opposite extreme. Weird coral formations sprout from the walls on all sides.

The first sight that catches your eye is a glint of silvery white in the darkness. Closer inspection shows that it is a platinum coin resting on a misshapen altar of stone encrusted with coral. The strange fish are spread out before the altar, clearly engaged in some kind of hideous worship.

A group of 75 devilfish acolytes inhabit the lake; there is also a single group of higher-level fish (one priest, curate, bishop, patriarch, and matriarch). Finally, there is a vampire patriarch who has not yet arrived at this ceremony, but who will appear shortly. All these higher-level fish cast clerical spells, but it's impossible to tell the acolytes from the spellcasters.

The characters automatically alert the fish by storming the altar. Before the PCs can cast any spells or attempt to Turn the devilfish, the creatures start pounding the coral formations with their tails.

These corals create awful vibrations in the chamber when struck. The din echoes horribly, preventing the PCs from thinking or fighting straight. Spellcasting of any sort is impossible while the noise continues, and attacks are also made more difficult. The devilfish are immune to the noise. Twelve devilfish acolytes beat at the coral as combat begins; for each pair of fish hitting the coral in a round, all PC attacks are at -1 (thus, the PCs' attacks are at -6 to begin with).

The players can cut down this penalty by targeting and defeating the fish who create the noise. Each pair of acolytes defeated reduces the attack penalty by one. Destroying the coral also negates the penalty, but this is quite difficult because of the coral's magical protection. Give the coral a saving throw of 8 against physical or magical damage. If the saving throw is failed, one bank of coral is broken and useless, and the penalty is reduced by one. After six banks of coral are destroyed, the chamber itself is demolished.

During combat, the spellcasting devilfish cast *continual darkness*, *cause fear*, *silence 15' radius* (against magic-users and clerics), multiple *curses* (which levy -2 penalties to the PCs' saving throws), *cause disease*, *cause serious wounds*, *create poison*, *finger of death*, and other offensive spells. Of course, the PCs should

have no trouble making their saving throws against these attacks, but one never knows when a player will roll a 1.

The vampire patriarch does not arrive until two rounds of combat have passed (this means that all attempts to Turn the devilfish before the vampire patriarch's arrival are unsuccessful). The vampire avoids direct contact as long as possible, preferring aggressive spells over Energy Drains. The DM should try to avoid Energy Drains except in extreme instances because of their ability to unbalance a party of PCs. The devilfish matriarch casts *cureall* on the vampire patriarch if it ever approaches death in combat.

Devilfish:

Acolytes: AC 6; HD 1; hp 6; AT 2; D 1/1; MV 120'(40'); Save C1; AL C; THAC0 19.

Priest: AC 6; HD 2*; hp 12; AT 2; D 1/1; MV 120'(40'); Save C2; AL C; THAC0 18; SA clerical spells.

Spells:

First level: *cause light wounds* and *cause fear*.

Curate: AC 6; HD 3*; hp 18; AT 2; D 1/1; MV 120'(40'); Save C3; AL C; THAC0 17; SA clerical spells.

Spells:

First level: *cause light wounds* and *darkness*.

Second level: *know alignment* and *silence 15' radius*.

Bishop: AC 6; HD 4*; hp 24; AT 2; D 1/1; MV 120'(40'); Save C4; AL C; THAC0 16; SA clerical spells.

Spells:

First level: *cause fear*, *cause light wounds*, and *darkness*.

Second level: *hold person* and *silence 15' radius*.

Third level: *continual darkness* and *cause disease*.

Patriarch: AC 6; HD 5*; hp 30; AT 2; D 1-4/1-6; MV 120'(40'); Save C5; AL C; THAC0 14; SA clerical spells; SD (see p. 26, *Master DM's Book*).

Spells:

First level: *detect magic*, *cause fear*, and *resist cold*.

Second level: *curse*, *know alignment*, and *hold person*.

Third level: *continual darkness*, *cause disease*, and *curse*.

Fourth level: *cause poison* and *cause serious wounds*.

Chapter 2: HARD WORK FOR SMALL PAY

Matriarch: AC 6; HD 6***; hp 36; AT 2; D 1-4/1-6; MV 120'(40'); Save C6; AL C; THAC0 14; SA clerical spells; SD (see p. 26, *Master DM's Book*).

Spells:

First level: *cause light wounds, darkness, detect magic, and cause fear.*

Second level: *find traps, hold person, know alignment, and silence 15' radius.*

Third level: *cause disease, continual darkness, curse, and speak with dead.*

Fourth level: *cause serious wounds, create poison, and dispel magic.*

Fifth level: *commune and finger of death.*

Sixth level: *word of recall.*

Vampire: AC 6; HD 6*****; hp 40; AT 2; D 1-4/1-6; MV 120'(40'); Save C6; AL C; THAC0 14; SA (see p. 26, *Master DM's Book*); SD (see SA).

The fish swim away in all directions, if they lose half their numbers or their spellcasting leaders. If the players are having a tough time defeating the devilfish, say that the water has filled with blood; this sends the devilfish into a feeding frenzy. Like sharks, the devilfish attack each other in their berserk hunger. This reduces their numbers somewhat (though it may also reduce the number of the PCs if the players aren't careful).

Weird runes are carved in the stone of the altar. The runes activate a *gate* spell that the devilfish matriarch uses to travel to the Elemental Plane of Water. PCs may use the spell to travel to Eloysia as a fallback contingency, in case they have trouble completing this section. The copper coin informs the PCs that a magic-user can choose the destination plane by speaking one of the mottos from the coins.

Hanging in the darkness above the altar is the body of the diver whose ghost the PCs met in the previous encounter. The bloated corpse holds a wooden chest and has been draped in seaweed by the devilfish, apparently as a fiendish parody of vestal garments. The chest's treasure (300 cp) has vanished with the rest of the area's loot.

The PCs can rescue this body once the devilfish are defeated. They can appease the ghost by giving it a decent burial on land. The ghost rewards their effort with the gold

coin before vanishing forever.

The Coin

The platinum cut-out coin should be given to the PCs now, or else you can read them the following:

This is a heavy platinum coin. It is obviously very valuable. The woman shown in profile on one side has a stately expression and looks like a queen or noblewoman. The woman appears to be in her mid-forties. On the reverse is what looks like a simple stone block: perhaps some kind of altar.

The altar on the coin is in a temple that the PCs will eventually find in Solius. The platinum piece is the creation of the most powerful Ruling Wizard, Dyan, and holds the most powerful magic. The coin's holder may control any one creature (up to 40 HD) per day, up to the next midnight. This magic works as the artifact power of *control* (*Master DM's Book*, pp. 51-52), except that only one creature may be controlled at any one time. The victim gets a Saving Throw vs. Spells to avoid the *control*. The holder may keep trying, however, once a round if the first attempt fails. Also, the holder must be able to see their victim to control its actions. The controlled creature cannot be forced to kill itself. Likewise, the holder is unable to fight or cast spells while controlling others. Movement is possible, though at half the normal rate.

The platinum coin was created by Dyan, who is not so much leader of the Ruling Wizards as "first among equals." Her apparent youth conceals several centuries of exhaustive magical study. Though wise and basically compassionate, Dyan has a streak of haughtiness — or more politely, a great deal of self-confidence. The player who holds this coin should be ready to charge any foe, greet every noble as an equal, and refuse to take guff from anyone.

Random Events

Preserving the players' freedom of choice is crucial in any adventure. Although the DM wants them to find all the coins, a sense of possible failure by missing a coin or two must

be perpetrated. Random events, inserted at the DM's discretion, during play, can convey that sense. Here are but a few suggestions; feel free to improvise more as they are needed. Random encounters with wandering monsters are not possible in this plane, though, since all life has been swept from the area by Durhan's enchantment.

A. Storm

A titanic thunderstorm could arise between encounters. The sphinxes withdraw to their cave and erect a barrier; Granite the giant might die of exposure if the PCs don't reach him quickly. Turbulence muddies the lake waters, letting the devilfish attack by surprise. Such complications should last for no more than one encounter.

B. Night

Though hardly random, the onset of dusk toward the end of the search may jeopardize the last encounter. Dominagon might escape unseen and the sphinxes might be asleep. The ghost and devilfish could gain strength at night due to evil enchantments.

What If They Miss a Coin?

Technically, all five coins must be found before the adventure can continue. If the players are having a hard time obtaining one or more of the coins, don't let them get frustrated; let four coins (or even three) open the portal to the Wizards' plane. The PCs can also reach Eloysia via the *gate* spell on the devilfish altar.

The DM may also allow one of the powerful monsters from other encounters to aid the PCs in a particularly difficult spot. Demos thenes the sphinx, for example, may be persuaded to roar above the underwater devilfish lair, scaring some of the evil fish away. (Of course, the PCs will have to answer another series of riddles in return for the favor.)

In any case, the XP award at the end of the adventure should be adjusted downward according to the amount of help the players require. Retrieving the coins should be the hardest work the players have ever done for five coins.

Chapter 3: ARRIVAL IN ELOYSIA

Encounter Setting

The Outer Plane of Eloysia is in some ways a reverse image of the Prime Plane. Whereas the PCs' world floats through the vast emptiness of outer space, the realm of the Ruling Wizards is almost filled with material. Quintillions of cubic light-years of weird, semi-solid, gray material fills the entire plane: this is called the *plenum*.

Obviously, the physical laws of this universe differ greatly from those of the Prime Plane. Different forces operate in this plane. If they did not, the plenum would collapse in upon itself.

But in this vast waste there are pockets of magic. Scattered thinly through the plenum, like bubbles of gas in soda water, are a few spherical habitats. Life has arisen here (perhaps migrating from other planes). Each sphere is minute by cosmic comparison, separated from its neighbors by incomprehensibly large distances. In human terms, each is as large as our own solar system, playing host to whole civilizations.

Physical Description

Eloysia is a colossal, hollow sphere filled with breathable air and lit by a small central sun. Around the sun, thousands of large, rocky islands proceed in stately orbits — not in belts, like the asteroids of our own solar system, but in concentric shells, like electrons around the nucleus of an atom.

Some islands are practically dust-motes hardly a mile across. Others are as big as states or nations. Every few millennia, a shard of the plenum, at the boundary of the sphere, is baked solid by the sun's heat; it breaks free and drifts inward to join the other islands in their orbits.

As for the shape of a typical island, they most closely resemble a cornflake. These islands are usually flat, with occasional bumps overall and ridges at the edges. Making the cornflake the size of Montana gives a relative scale for an Eloysian island. The inner side of the island always faces the sun; the inhabitants of all islands live in perpetual noon. The underside miles beneath is dark and lifeless. As for the interior of each island, who knows what creatures live there?

The Shells

There are three concentric shells of islands around Eloysia's sun; these islands share orbits much in the same manner as electrons around an atomic nucleus.

The inner shell, hardly more than 10,000 miles from the sun, is too hot to support human life. The scorched rocks here have nothing to offer but pools of molten metal, which the Eloysians sometimes mine. Fire elementals and bizarre alien creatures are occasionally spotted here.

Several thousand miles further out are the warm, agricultural islands. These lush, green farm-worlds grow food to feed Eloysia's inhabitants. The fields and vineyards are watered by vast, permanent rainstorms that wander through the shell, sustained by complex climatic patterns and magical forces.

The outermost shell, about 2,000 miles beyond the farm belt, contains the many island kingdoms of Eloysia. This is where most of the inhabitants live in a bewildering diversity of nations and cultures. Among these is the kingdom of the Ruling Wizards and its beautiful city of Solius — or rather, the site where Solius once was.

The Situation

In this part of the adventure, there are four names to keep straight:

Eloysia is the name of the entire plane.

Trann and *Volde* are two island kingdoms in this plane. The Ruling Wizards govern Trann, which Durhan invades from his own kingdom of Volde.

Solius is the capital city of the kingdom of Trann. It is the major urban center of that island kingdom. Durhan caused Solius to vanish and has ripped up the very land on which it rested to prevent its rescue. This piece of land, the city site, is now in great danger.

The PCs arrive near the vacant city site. Their magic coins are no longer magical — but don't let the players throw them away! They're not worthless by any means.

There are several buildings which remain on the vacant site. These buildings are the Wizards' strongholds, which are protected by powerful spells. In the buildings (and sometimes from the residents), the PCs learn of the Wizards' and Solius's peril. They must rescue the Wizards from a foul imprisonment before the city crashes into the sun and is destroyed.

Each building encounter can be resolved with the non-magical use of a coin: spending it, offering it, and so on. If the PCs don't want to part with their coins, most encounters can also be handled without the coins — it's simply tougher to do so.

The building encounters give the players information and tools to use in their trip

downward to the treasure vaults of Solius. The Wizards are imprisoned herein. Once the Wizards are freed, they'll need the PCs' help in restoring and rescuing Solius, and then in retaking their kingdom from Durhan — but that's the next section.

Time Limits

With the sun looming ever closer to Solius, the PCs are under a severe time pressure. They have just enough time to visit all five buildings and rescue the Wizards from the vault before the city hits the sun. Any diversion means they must give up visiting a building or fail to rescue the Wizards.

Specific times of disasters and durations of activities are not given here. The flexible time limit can be adjusted to the mood of the game. When players are enjoying themselves, bend the time limits to let them have fun without penalty. Conversely, when players waste time or play poorly, have the sun loom larger or the ground tremble in order to get them back on track.

Encounter Key

1. Opening the Portal

When the PCs have secured the last of the coins, the copper coin transmits to its holder the knowledge of how to open the dimensional portal. The coins must be placed on the ground in a ring, enclosing a small central circle about 1" across. When the PCs do this, read the following aloud:

As you watch, the coins begin to make small movements on their own — twisting a little and adjusting their positions. Suddenly, they leap into the air. The coins still form a ring, although they spin around that empty center with greater acceleration. The coins start giving off sparks and begin making a high-pitched whine. In the center of the ring, you see a bright light. It strains your eyes to stare at the light.

The coins gradually move apart, still spinning as a ring, and the central light grows larger and brighter.

This central light is the dimensional portal to Eloysia. If the PCs don't want to enter, the copper coin prompts them to do so. Passage through the portal is harmless, but it is only one-way. PCs who pass through cannot climb back or communicate with those still on the Prime Plane.

2. The Grassland

You're standing in an empty field much like the one you left back home. The ring of coins stops spinning, the light disappears, and the coins fall to the ground. You can pick them up now.

You see long grass waving in a cool breeze and a pond nearby with an island in its center. A bright sun shines directly overhead. Everything seems ordinary enough — but as your eyes scan the heavens, you realize that something is not quite right.

Overhead, the sky is light gray and appears to curve out from the horizon, then around overhead. You feel as though you are near the inside bottom of a huge globe. The sun hangs in the middle of the globe. Now you notice hundreds of huge, flat chunks of rock floating all over the sky. Each chunk of rock is green on the side facing the sun and dark on the far side. To all appearances, they are islands floating in the sky.

The pond actually looks like a wide moat surrounding a steep hill with a flat top. On that hill, you see several large buildings, an open central area like a courtyard, and an outline around the hill that marks out what might be the pattern of what appear to be castle walls. A stone gate with a portcullis stands where a real castle gate might be, but there are no walls around it. The portcullis just stands there alone in the open.

By the moat is a small brick building with open archways and a shingled roof. You see no sign of life anywhere.

The coins, now returned to their dimension, have lost their powers; they are ordinary coins of this realm. Depending on the DM's style of play, this fact may be related to the players now or when a PC tries to use one of the coins' previous magic abilities.

PCs can literally walk to the edge of this island and peer over into gray emptiness. They see other islands in the middle and outer shells, glinting in the sunlight. The central sun generates a repulsive force which pushes the large objects away from it. The plenum boundary generates a similar, though weaker, repulsive force. The larger the object, the more the force of the sun acts upon it; the smaller the object, the less the sun acts on it. It is for this reason that smaller islands are closer to the sun. Thus, if a PC slips off the island edge, it's a 1000-plus-mile fall to the

central sun.

The buildings are the strongholds of the Ruling Wizards. The PCs stand at what was once the bustling center of Solius. Now, the city, its population, and the castle have vanished, just as the PCs' city did in the first chapter (an alert PC may draw this conclusion by observation and guesswork). The Wizards' own dwellings and the castle gate were protected from the vanishing spell by powerful spells.

There are four buildings remaining: from the far shore of the moat, they can be clearly distinguished. There is a stone dragon sculpture, a giant sphinx statue (like the famous Egyptian sphinx), a gloomy building that looks like a mausoleum, and a temple at the far end of the courtyard.

The city structure nearest the PCs is the gate, which stands directly opposite the small brick building on their side of the moat. This building houses Warrick's wishing well.

The building encounters are described in this chapter and are shown in the accompanying maps. The PCs probably want to see the well first: this is Encounter A, which gets them into the castle. The petrified dragon is Encounter B, and Kendall's sphinx statue is Encounter C. If the PCs visit the mausoleum of Jacaine, go to Encounter D, and if they want to see Dyan's temple, go to Encounter E. PCs may bypass the well and find another way across the moat; if so, the order in which they visit the buildings will vary.

A Race Against Time

The site of Solius is heading toward imminent destruction. It started in the outer shell of islands, in the urban region of Eloysia. Now, it's in the middle (agricultural) shell, moving ponderously toward the inner shell on a direct course to the heart of the sun! There is nothing the PCs can do about this; only the Ruling Wizards can rescue the city site.

The players will probably elect to head toward a building. Once they've visited one or two of these structures, they will realize the imminent danger and the need to rescue the Wizards.

Every time the PCs emerge from one of the buildings, mention that the sun is bigger and hotter, and that the islands of green are slowly replaced by islands of sunburnt rock. If the DM reminds the players of the island's approach to the sun and their helplessness to prevent it, this should produce the suspense necessary for increasing time pressure.

3. The Buildings

The Wizards chose where the five coins would arrive in the Prime Plane. Each monster that obtained a coin (dragon, sphinx, ghost, and devilfish) was picked to provide a clue to the stronghold of that coin's Wizard. The clue may help clever players deal with the encounter in that stronghold.

Some building encounters have several solutions or outcomes. In each case, the path of least resistance involves using the appropriate coin in some non-magical way, such as buying something or making an offering. In doing so, the coin vanishes and the PCs gain their goal.

However, if the PCs refuse to part with their coins (which are no longer good for anything, magically speaking), they can still rescue the Wizards (though with greater difficulty).

A. The Wishing Well

This small building is the only structure on this side of the moat. It's a small stone building with arched doorways in every wall, and stands exactly opposite the gate across the moat.

Through the doorway, you see a circular stone well. The well is a waist-high wall built around a hole 6' across. A simple wooden frame above the well holds a painted sign. The sign has a picture of the bearded man on the copper coin and words in a language you cannot understand.

There is a small wooden booth and a chair against the wall by the well, but the building itself is deserted.

The building and well both belong to the Ruling Wizard Warrick. The sign reads "Wish for the good of the kingdom of Trann" in the language of Eloysia. The booth and chair were used by a guard (a retired veteran on a sinecure) who stood by to keep children from climbing in, answer questions, tell people how to use the well, and so forth. By adding details like a half-eaten apple or an open guestbook and pen, the DM can convey the idea that whoever was here must have disappeared very suddenly.

The obvious thing to do is throw the copper coin in the well. A PC who does so may make a *wish* for information or assistance. Warrick's enchantment works only for the good of Solius and Trann, so selfish *wishes* should be disregarded.

In this situation, however, anything that

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helps the PCs rescue the Wizards is definitely for the good of Trann. If anyone makes such a *wish*, a small, fragile globe filled with smoky, green vapor appears by the well. This is a special poison that works only on the Wizards' guardians; it is useful in the next section. If the PC who holds it is clumsy or gets into a fight before then, the globe may be broken, allowing the gas to escape harmlessly.

Wishing for a way to enter the castle grounds works, as does any request to know more about the situation. The DM is advised to refuse or modify *wishes* that unbalance an encounter or render the scenario pointless.

The PC also magically receives information that helps in the coming encounters. Note that the copper coin provides more exposition, even though it is sacrificed in the well.

You hear a voice in your minds — the voice of the elderly wizard on the copper coin. "This message is given in times of grave emergency. It is beyond the well's power to tell what's wrong or what must be done.

"Seek guidance in the castle, at the dwellings of the Ruling Wizards. If the Wizards cannot be found, the danger is great; seek safety in the castle vaults.

"You may now enter the castle and speak freely with its residents. Do what you can to help in our city's time of need."

Suddenly, the characters are able to read the language on the sign; they also find that they can speak with Eloysia's inhabitants (once they encounter some). This enchantment lasts as long as the PCs are in Eloysia.

If a PC throws another coin in the well, the well spits it back out. If a PC climbs down into the well to retrieve a coin, the industrious character finds that the bottom of the well, a quarter-mile down, is empty.

When the PCs are ready to leave the well, they hear rushing water outside. In the moat, a bridge of solidified water — not ice, but an enchanted sphere of liquid water firm enough to walk on — rises in a great bulge from the moat's surface. The water leads directly to the gate on the castle hill.

Mention to the players that, as the PCs walk, they notice that the sun seems slightly larger and brighter than when they arrived. This begins the gradual intensification of heat and brightness in this section.

When the PCs reach the island, the portcullis raises slowly to allow them to enter. This would ordinarily be the only way into the castle, but now anyone can walk around

it, across the boundaries of the vanished walls.

If the PCs ignore the well, they must cross to the castle without the bridge. There is nothing harmful in the water; any guardians have vanished with the city. Other encounters can provide the information above.

B. The Blue Dragon

This is a strangely-shaped building, constructed in the form of a dragon sitting on all fours. The stonework is amazingly detailed. The dragon's head rears back fiercely, its mouth open. The mouth has been bricked over and the eyes are empty. In the belly of the stone dragon are two large steel doors.

The building was once a large blue dragon. In a titanic struggle, the Wizard Saybrook turned it to stone. Unwilling to let it go to waste, the Wizard hollowed the dragon out to make a sanctum. The structure appears magical to detection because of Saybrook's powerful protective enchantments.

Each entrance to the building — the door in the belly and the two eyes — is protected by a *symbol of unusual subtlety*. It works as an ordinary *symbol of discord* cast at 36th level, but the spell doesn't take effect until one round after the victim passes the portal. As a result, the rest of the party has time to use the same entrance, thereby risking the same effect!

Give each PC an ability check against their Intelligence to detect the *symbol*, which is inconspicuously placed above each entrance. Do not tell the players what they're rolling for until they've decided whether or not to use the entrance. Players who fail the check fall prey to the spell, and should be told that their characters are "surrounded by enemies!" The affected PCs attack their friends in what they believe to be self-defense.

To overcome the spell's effect, a PC needs *dispel magic* or *cureall*. If desired, the DM can allow another Intelligence check to let the PC realize his behavior is controlled and that a magical cure is needed.

Once the PCs are inside (and have stopped fighting each other), read the next two paragraphs aloud if they're in the dragon's belly; read the two paragraphs following those if they entered through the eyes:

Entering the Dragon's Belly

This large, oval-shaped room has a rounded ceiling. The walls here have long, vertical bulges like ribs. There are chandeliers hanging at intervals along a beam running lengthwise along the roof. The beam resembles a spine. The simulation of a dragon's skeleton is disturbingly realistic.

The furnishings include silk-covered divans with big pillows, wall tapestries woven in abstract designs, lamps with fringed shades, and a thick carpet. The room looks very plush and exotic.

Entering the Dragon's Eyes

This small room has a rounded stone ceiling and a wooden floor. The eye sockets of the dragon's head are windows, which give a picturesque view of the castle moat and the field beyond. There is nothing else here but a couple of long wooden tables, a desk, and a few shelves.

The dragon's belly contains the living quarters; a long stairway leads up the neck to the head, where the wizard's study and laboratory are housed.

The living quarters reveal Saybrook's luxurious tastes. The furnishings are worth 5000 gp all told, if the PCs want to loot the place and carry around a bunch of pillows and rolled-up tapestries for the rest of the adventure. There is nothing else of interest in this room except the Wizard's familiar, Popiel (see below). If the PCs entered via the study, they meet Popiel there.

Saybrook uses the study for research, though he carries these materials with him in a *bag of holding* to prevent theft. A hollow beneath the floorboards, directly beneath one heavy table leg, contains a small wooden box. The box looks none too sturdy, though its actually *magic locked* (the reverse of *magic door*) at 36th level and is virtually indestructible. Saybrook's familiar can, however, open it at a touch.

In the box, wrapped in gauze padding, is a small, worthless-looking glass marble. This marble is the key to the vault beneath the castle grounds where the Wizards are now imprisoned. The marble has no value as treasure.

The only other item of interest in the study is a non-magical scroll on the desk: an unfinished letter from Saybrook to a friend on another island, expressing his worry about

some of Durhan's recent warlike actions. The letter, written in bold and attractive handwriting, mentions a recent increase in Durhan's magical power, but continues to say that the Ruling Wizards have been unable to find the source of the increase. The letter ends, "Our beloved city, our entire kingdom, may be in grave —" The note ends there.

Wherever they enter the dragon building, the PCs soon notice a flicker of movement. Something small disappears behind a piece of furniture. The flickering continues until the PCs investigate. Upon doing so, they find a tiny dragon — Saybrook's familiar, Popiel. She is friendly and quite useful. If the players see that she's small, cute, and harmless, they'll probably want to kill her immediately. Popiel cries "Mercy!" before they attack. If the PCs still want to kill her, let them; it's their mistake. (The DM may wish to consider an alignment change for all involved, however.)

The familiar exactly resembles a full-sized blue dragon, but is no larger than the palm of a hand. Popiel has an Intelligence of 9, and can speak the language of Eloysis. Popiel has none of a dragon's usual magical powers and no breath weapon (save a tiny spark or two — enough to startle a PC). However, she can fly with the speed and agility of a hummingbird, and has most of the abilities of a 15th-level thief, except for Open Locks and Remove Traps.

Popiel's behavior is ordinarily cheerful, innocent, frivolous, and about as cute as the players can stand. Right now, she's worried about the disasters which have befallen the city and its Wizards. Popiel can tell the PCs anything about the situation they may have missed so far.

First, the PCs must win her trust. To Popiel, they're invaders. They should present a token of trust; the silver coin will do nicely, as anything made of silver particularly takes her fancy. Popiel can become a guide and ally for the party, providing vital clues when the players are stumped and helping them through treacherous obstacles (such as the treasure vault in the next section).

When playing Popiel, let her moods shift quickly, from ecstatic joy at gaining a new toy to sulkiness at any perceived slight. By having her react to individual PCs' personality quirks, role-playing is encouraged and everyone has fun.

Popiel: AC -4; HD 2; hp 8; AT nil; D nil; MV 360'(120'); Save F2; AL N; THAC0 nil.

As the PCs leave the dragon building, the sunlight has become noticeably stronger. Players should start realizing now that the city may be in danger.

C. The Sphinx

The next structure is an enormous granite statue of a sphinx at rest. Between its outstretched front paws is the entrance to a tunnel leading downward. The entrance appears to be unguarded and unobstructed.

A sphinx is hardly an ideal home. But for the Ruling Wizard Kendall, eccentricity is a virtue. Her sphinx dwelling is large, secure, expresses her strong identification with animals, and is known throughout Eloysis. It's part of her image — one which is appropriate for a mistress of illusion.

Of course, the entrance is not unguarded; nothing here is as it seems. The entrance is protected by a contingency spell that evokes *hallucinatory terrain* when intruders try to enter.

The illusory landscape is identical to the real terrain 50 yards away from the sphinx; an unwary victim could easily believe he's been *teleported* 50 yards away! In this illusion, the victim sees a false sphinx image in the distance. If the PC walks toward it, he steps out of the *hallucinatory terrain* spell's range, sees reality — and the real sphinx is 50 yards behind him.

With luck, this effect can be very eerie, and the players won't suspect the truth for some time. If Saybrook's familiar is with the party, she reveals the truth — after she's had a bit of fun enjoying the party's perplexity!

The illusion (cast at 36th level) can be *dispelled* with the usual chance for success, but keep careful track of which sphinx is which. Obviously, the fake sphinx's tunnel entrance, being illusory, has no magic to be *dispelled* and the fake entrance is out of spell range of the real one.

When (and if) the PCs get by this obstacle, read the following aloud:

Inside the sphinx is a big, well-lit room, about 60' by 30'; the ceiling is 20' high. The room resembles a museum. There are numerous animal sculptures on high pedestals: two lions in bronze, several swans made of glass, an iron statue of four wild horses, and two deer in brass. Each figure stands in a glass case.

Each of the room's four high walls is

decorated with a colorful fresco. Over the doorway is a scene of a royal court, with a king sitting on a high, brass-colored throne. His crown is made of the same brassy color.

On the east wall is a city skyline. Magnificent towers reach high into the air, with beautiful stone buildings and a great castle overlooking everything. The gray sky is dotted with floating islands.

The north wall provides another view of the castle, this time from a closer perspective. It's surrounded by a moat like the one you crossed to get here. On the other side of the moat is a city of wide, paved streets and well-dressed citizens.

The west wall shows a painting of various merchants doing business. They're dressed in rich robes and are counting out a large number of electrum coins.

Against the wall opposite you is a small, bed with an endtable beside it.

The animal sculptures are *phantasmal forces* which Kendall created for her amusement and has protected with glass cases. The glass shatters or cuts easily. If the sculptures are touched, they vanish.

On the endtable is a small electrum statuette — a real one — of Kendall, a frail, old woman with pleasant features. This token of appreciation was given to the Wizard by the citizens of Solius in a ceremony some years ago. It has no treasure value to anyone but Kendall.

The statuette and the electrum coin which the PCs have can be used to activate illusions which have been cast upon the walls of the room. Touching the paintings with the statue, coin, or anything bearing Kendall's likeness causes the paintings to fade; they are replaced by detailed maps. A given map's subject is hinted at in the painting's subject.

The painting of the king reveals an enormous physical map of the kingdom of Trann, with Solius marked near its center in red. PCs will realize that the kingdom surrounding the city on the map is nowhere to be seen outside.

The city skyline — a view of Solius as seen before it vanished — gives way to a street map of Solius. PCs can spot the castle and moat on the map. The PCs should realize by now that they are on the site of the city.

The painting of the castle and cityscape is a map of the castle grounds, with walls, fortifications, and interior buildings. The characters immediately recognize that all the castle's buildings and walls have vanished,

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save for the Wizards' dwellings. In the center of the grounds is a building marked "Vault Entrance." The PCs will find a trapdoor at that spot outside, which leads to the vaults below.

The painting of the merchants is a clear diagram of the path to the vault beneath the castle. This diagram shows a spiral staircase with two traps at the bottom, along with directions for disarming them. The vault interior is shown as a large room with thick walls encased by *anti-magic shells*. The map does not tell how to open the vault door.

When the PCs leave the building, they begin sweating immediately. The heat is severe. The light from the huge sun has turned the whole sky pale.

D. The Mausoleum

As you approach this bleak, stone building, the air grows colder. Low, ivy-covered walls with thick pillars in front hold a bronze door with the likeness of a face carved above it. The face is the same as the one on the gold coin. The building appears to be a crypt.

This place is gloomy, theatrical, and haunted — just like its owner. The Ruling Wizard Jacaine, for all his power, has been frustrated in his quest for immortality. He is obsessed with overcoming death, and designed this mouldy manse as a reminder of his goal.

The entrance is protected by a contingency and several *maze* spells (both cast at 36th level). Anyone trying to get in without permission (this includes the PCs) is thrust into an astral *maze* of awesome complexity.

A special touch arranged by Jacaine involves a gloomy voice that drones on while the victim threads the maze: "Oh, think upon thy death, mortal, and resolve to live a better life!" This and similar well-meaning sentiments are ceaselessly repeated until the character escapes the maze. By then, Jacaine is able to handle the would-be intruder personally — except while imprisoned.

PCs who escape the *maze* emerge inside the mausoleum.

The inside of the crypt is eerie and disheartening. The walls are made of black stone, the ceiling is low, and cobwebs are everywhere. The wall hangings look too flimsy to be tapestries. After awhile, you realize that they are grave rubbings done with gold crayon rubbed on black paper.

There is nothing in the room except two stone coffins on pedestals and a bed in the far corner. The coffins are black, and their stone lids are sculpted to look like people. One of the lids resembles a thin, young man in cheap wizards' robes; the other is of a plump, balding man in lavish robes.

The bed is a big four-poster with a high headboard. The frame, posts, and headboard are all ornamented with carved skeletons, and the bed itself is covered with a shroud. It looks as though no one has slept in it for quite awhile.

The furnishings are spare and colorless. The only light comes from a pair of blue globes on the walls to either side of the door. The globes are held in cobweb-covered wall braces.

As you survey the room, a gold tea-tray floats toward you.

The tray is carried by Drivel, a Neutral ghost who was once Jacaine's apprentice. Drivel died in an accident before completing his training, but his urge toward knowledge prevented him from seeking final rest. Jacaine



keeps him as a butler and manservant now.

One of the coffins contains Drivel's preserved body. Drivel no longer has any interest in it, though; the PCs can do whatever they want with it without arousing his concern. The other coffin is empty; Jacaine intends it as his own and keeps it around as a *memento mori*.

If a PC lays the gold coin on the tray as a tip for the butler, the coin disappears. Once more, the coin provides a potion: appearing on the tray is a flask of clear liquid with flecks of gold swirling through it. This potion will revive the Ruling Wizards from their magical suspension.

If the PCs give the butler any other coin, they hear a ghostly sniff, and the coin floats back to them.

The PCs can talk with Drivel. He speaks in a monotonous voice, but with utterly perfect composure: "Is there any way we may be of assistance, sir?" Drivel is a gentleman's ghostly gentleman: polite, helpful, formal, and proper. Drivel can be used to provide clues or exposition that the players may have missed in previous encounters.

If the PCs attack or Turn Drivel, he retreats to another plane for the rest of the adventure. "We can see we're not wanted, sir!" he says upon departure.

Drivel: AC -2; HD 14****; hp 70; AT 2; D aging/paralysis; MV 90'(30'); Save special; AL L; THAC0 8; SA (see p. 33, *DM's Companion: Book Two*); SD (see SA).

There is little of interest in the room. The blue globes are magical, but not especially useful; their light is extinguished if they're taken from the room. However, a wooden rack behind the headboard of the bed contains several glass vials. These vials are potions; there are six in the rack. The potions may be any type the DM desires. *Clairvoyance* and *clairaudience* are not recommended, however, because they could give away some important surprises later on. *Invulnerability*, *flying*, *fire resistance*, a strong *antidote*, *polymorph self*, and *blending* are advised instead.

When the PCs leave the building, remind them that the temperature has risen noticeably. The landscape is bleached by the bright sunlight.

E. The Temple

You stand before low, wide steps leading up to a temple. Bronze pillars more than 15' tall support a flat roof. There are no

walls. A narrow band of elaborately carved marble extends around the roof above the pillars. The stairs also surround the temple.

Through the pillars, you see a wide, marble floor, polished so brightly it reflects the roof overhead. At the far end of the rectangle is an altar made of white metal.

Though no cleric, the Ruling Wizard Dyan is profoundly devoted to her deity. She has erected this temple as an act of devotion. Prior to her imprisonment, Dyan lived here in a modest room below the temple.

There are no protective enchantments in the temple; PCs may move about freely. The room in which Dyan lived lies beneath the altar — a chamber which can only be entered by magical means. There is nothing of interest in the spartan chamber, though.

The carvings on the roof frieze may provide clues to perceptive PCs. They depict seascapes, coral reefs, and — among other sea monsters — devilfish. The monsters are shown fleeing from a beautiful, armor-clad woman who bears a sword. This is Dyan's deity.

On the altar is a small platinum dish worth 200 gp. Nothing happens if anyone steals the dish, although Dyan will be most displeased when the PCs rescue her. If a PC lays the platinum coin on this dish as an offering, it disappears.

There's a sudden burning odor. The pillars around the temple tremble slightly, sag, stretch, and grow, as though being pounded out by a smith. The pillars reform one by one into 10 muscular bronze figures, each 16' tall. They support the roof with arms as thick as tree trunks. On their foreheads are strange runes. Suddenly, the bronze figures speak in unison, in deep, resonant voices: "Yours to command."

The platinum coin, even when it's not enchanted, continues to provide the ability to control: These 10 bronze golems obey the PC who made the offering. They will do as they are told, but know nothing important. (The first command should probably be, "Don't set the roof down until we get outside!") The golems are a gift from Dyan's deity. *War Machine* statistics are given for the 10 golems in case the PCs decide to take them into battle with Durhan in the next chapter.

Bronze Golems: AC 0; HD 20**; hp 110; AT 1; D 3-30 + special; MV 240'(80'); Save

F10; AL N; THAC0 5; SA 1-10 points heat damage; SD 2-12 points damage heated blood.

When the PCs leave the temple, the sun is much closer indeed. The landscape is scorched, the sky is washed out with pure white light, and the heat is unbearable. The PCs take 1 hp of damage for each turn they remain outside.

4. Rescuing The Wizards

Once the PCs have visited all the buildings — or whenever they feel ready — they can try to rescue the Wizards. This can be done in the following steps:

A. Find the Vault and Enter It.

The vault entrance is concealed in the middle of the castle courtyard, where the main building itself used to be. The map from the sphinx shows its location. If the PCs don't have the map, the entrance can be detected for as a secret door; otherwise, one of the NPCs encountered could have told of it: Popiel, the ghostly butler, or even the golems.

The thick iron trapdoor is camouflaged by a thin layer of dirt; it is also protected by a very complicated lock (–30% to Open Lock rolls) and by a 36th-level *magic lock* spell.

The entrance and staircase leading down are both too small for the bronze golems to use. They must wait at the surface for the PCs' return.

B. Get to the Bottom Without Dying.

The difficulty of this step is up to the DM. Below the vault entrance is a long and narrow, tightly-winding spiral staircase. Only two people can walk (or fight) abreast here. At every turn there is a fortified guardpost set into the wall.

These posts — 10 in all — are staffed with elite (15th-level) pairs of archers or veteran fighters. Since the vault structure itself did not vanish when the city above did, it makes sense that the guards didn't either.

Such lengthy combats, however, may only serve to slow down the adventure; they may also frustrate the entire quest. Feel free to eliminate some or all of the guardposts.

C. Pass the Traps.

At the bottom of the spiral staircase is a small anteroom about 10' x 10', with the vault door opposite the staircase landing. The floor is tiled with an elaborate rectangular pattern. There are two traps here; these can be bypassed easily if the PCs have the map from the sphinx.

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The first trap is deliberately obvious: a tripwire across the bottom of the staircase is visible to any thief who bothers to look for traps. The tripwire triggers a vial of poison gas; PCs receive regular Saving Throws vs. Poison to survive the gas. Authorized persons bypass this first trap by means of a concealed switch on the staircase wall. The trap can be disarmed automatically by a thief; other PCs can also disarm it easily by rolling a successful ability check against their Dexterity.

This obvious trap, though, is only a feint. Once the tripwire is disarmed, PCs may think the way is clear to the vault door, but the truly subtle trap is sprung only when they touch the door. At this point, the floor opens up beneath the PCs and they plunge down a wide hole that drives straight through the entire floating island! The usual chance to detect this trap is halved, though dwarves notice an unusual gap in the tiling on a successful ability check against Intelligence.

Of course, the PCs have a chance to escape their fate. They fall through a rocky shaft for three rounds; during this time, they can make Strength checks at -6, -8, and -12 respectively in an attempt to grab a protruding rock and halt their fall. With a successful grab, a PC takes 1d6 damage for each round they have fallen. The PC can then climb back up to the anteroom by rolling a successful Dexterity check; failure means the PC slips and falls, and must repeat the procedure above. Climbing takes two rounds for every round the PCs have fallen.

Also, a PC is in range of magical rescue for all three rounds and for one round after he reaches the end of the shaft (and is falling free below the island).

If a PC misses every chance at rescue after all this, the character falls several thousand miles and perishes at the gray plenum boundary. The Ruling Wizards, once revived may locate the remains and *raise* the character, once the city itself is saved from danger.

D. Get Into the Vault.

This is a tough job: The walls, floor, and ceiling are lead, and have a permanent *anti-magic shell* sandwiched between two 1' layers of solid iron. (The shell, which ordinarily protects only one person, was increased to cover the whole vault through carefully worded wishes.)

The door of the vault is made of 3'-thick iron. Its lock is comprised of an array of glass marbles imbedded in the door; one slot in the pattern is empty. The glass marble from Saybrook's study opens the vault door. Opening the lock without the marble is fiendishly diffi-

cult (-65% to Open Locks roll) because its parts seem to fade in and out of existence.

If the party is accompanied by Saybrook's familiar, Popiel can stabilize the lock mechanism long enough for a thief to attempt picking it at the usual percentage chance.

E. Defeat the Wizards' Guards.

Once the PCs get into the vault, read the following section aloud. If they're invisible, ethereal, or in some other odd state of being, the DM may want to amend the first paragraph.

In the moment before the three vicious-looking, three-armed giants charge you, this is what you see:

The vault is a big room empty of treasure, except for a few stray coins scattered on the floor. There are people stretched out on stone slabs, tilted slightly away from the horizontal position. They're restrained with iron bands. Some kind of eye peers at them from a tall, glass vat of pale green liquid.

The giants wear loincloths and carry huge wooden clubs. The monsters are heavily built, their skin is covered with coarse bristles, each has a third arm growing out of his chest, and they're all unbelievably ugly. They are almost upon you.

These creatures are three athachs. Durhan promised them great treasure for guarding the Ruling Wizards, but neglected to tell them the city is heading toward the sun. The athachs are too stupid to understand this anyway, and the PC's certainly can't persuade them of the danger.

If the PCs have the gas globe from the wishing well, they can break it here. The gas billows out and kills the athachs instantly; it has no effect on anyone else.

Athachs: AC 0; HD 14*; hp 70; AT 4; D 2-24 (x3)/2-20; MV 180'(60'); Save F14; AL C; THAC0 8; SA poisonous bite.

The eye that was vaguely perceived before the battle is a mummified beholder eye that was captured and preserved in its liquid bath by Durhan. The eye casts a permanent *anti-magic* ray over the Wizards and everyone else in the room. No one can cast spells as long as the eye remains in its solution. The solution is highly corrosive to humans; anyone putting an exposed hand into it suffers 10 hp of damage. Armor protects briefly from this damage, but it is eaten away within a minute. As soon as the eye is removed from the solution,

it withers to a brown husk and the *anti-magic* effect ceases. The eye cannot be rejuvenated.

The five Wizards are bound in iron at the chest and ankles. They're all unconscious.

F. Revive the Wizards.

This is easy, if the PCs have the gold-flecked potion from Jacaine's mausoleum. With this potion, they can administer a few drops to each Wizard, *dispelling* the paralysis. If they don't have the potion, only high-level healing magic (such as *cureall*) will do the job.

This is a good time to describe the Ruling Wizards to your players. The physical descriptions of each are given at the end of this module.

Once the Wizards Are Rescued

The Wizards blink once or twice, then come to full awareness. By now, the vault and the whole island are quite hot. The Wizards urgently ask the PCs for an explanation. Without taking time to thank the PCs, all five Wizards rush into the hallway (outside the vault's *anti-magic shell*); joining hands, they *teleport* to the surface. If Popiel is with the party, she goes with Saybrook.

PCs may wish to stay in the vault to look for treasure, but before long, the walls start trembling and the ground shakes. The Wizards are trying to halt the city's progress towards the sun; because this strains the entire site greatly, underground is not the best place to be while this happens! Encourage the players to follow the Wizards to the surface — there will be time for treasure later.

Once on the surface, the PCs witness a dramatic sight:

The sky is filled with fire. The sun overhead stretches across your field of vision and searing winds blow across the grasslands. The grass is brown and withered. Smoke is everywhere.

Overhead, the five Wizards float hand-in-hand in a circle. Their eyes are closed. The Wizards are chanting in unison in a language you don't understand (not Eloysian). They seem to be in pain.

After a time, they float gently to the ground. Some of them are bleeding from the nose and ears. Whatever they were trying to do, you can tell from their pained expressions that they did not succeed. They approach you. "Have you anyone skilled in the ways of magic?" they ask.

Sir Theobold Redbeard

30th-level fighter (knight)

Ability Scores

Strength	18 (+3 to hit and damage)
Intelligence	12
Wisdom	9
Dexterity	14 (+1 AC bonus)
Constitution	13 (+1 hp/die)
Charisma	12

Combat Skills

Armor Class: -5.

Hit Points: 112.

To Hit Armor Class 0 (THAC0): -1.

Weapon Mastery: longsword (expert, +4 to hit, 1d6 + 4 damage plus Str. bonus, -2 AC vs. 3 attacks/round) and dagger (skilled, +2 to hit, 1d6 damage plus Str. bonus, -1 AC vs. 1 attack/round, double damage on 20).

Wrestling Rating: 20.

Equipment

Weapons: sword +3 ("Trollbane"), dagger +3 ("Fang"), and a returning spear +2.
Armor: plate mail +3 and shield +3.
Possessions: pouch of security (tends to talk at random, as well as scream if it's stolen), potion of fire resistance, potion of water breathing, and a whisky flask.

Description

Age: 46.
Height: 6'2".
Weight: 200 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: red/blue.
Appearance: Majestic, solidly-built nobleman with keen eyes and a full red beard.
Languages: Common and Lawful.
Alignment: Lawful.

Saving Throws

Death Ray or Poison	3
Magic Wands	4
Paralysis or Turn to Stone	4
Dragon Breath	3
Rod, Staff, or Spell	4

Special Abilities

Three attacks or actions per round.
Smash THAC0 3, +21 points damage.
Parry and Disarm combat options.

XP: 2,760,000.

Money: 27,600 gp.

Theona of the Righteous Glory

30th-level cleric

Ability Scores

Strength	10
Intelligence	11
Wisdom	18 (+3 Save vs. Spells)
Dexterity	12
Constitution	10
Charisma	17 (+1 reaction)

Combat Skills

Armor Class: -1.

Hit Points: 71.

To Hit Armor Class 0 (THAC0): 5.

Weapon Mastery: mace (skilled, +2 to hit, 2d4 damage, -1 AC vs. 1 attack/round).

Wrestling Rating: 17.

Equipment

Weapon: breathing mace +3, +4 vs. Chaotic opponents.
Armor: chain mail +3 and shield +2 emblazoned with church symbol.
Possessions: potions of antidote, heroism, and super-healing, rod of victory, and hymnal.

Description

Age: 40.
Height: 5'8".
Weight: 200 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: black/black.
Appearance: Portly and very serious-looking.
Languages: Common and Lawful.
Alignment: Lawful.

Spells

First Level: cure light wounds, detect evil, detect magic, light, protection from evil, purify food and water, remove fear, and resist cold.

Second Level: bless, find traps, hold person, resist fire, silence 15' radius, snake charm, and speak with animal (x2).

Third Level: continual light, cure blindness, cure disease, growth of animals, locate object, remove curse (x2), and striking.

Fourth Level: create water, cure serious wounds, dispel magic, neutralize poison, protection from evil 10' radius, speak with plants, and sticks to snakes.

Fifth Level: create food (x2), cure critical wounds (x2), dispel evil, finger of death, and truesight.

Sixth Level: animate objects, barrier, create normal animals, cure all (x2), find the path, and speak with monsters.

Seventh Level: earthquake, restore, survival (x3), and wizardry.

Prosper

30th-level thief

Ability Scores

Strength	10
Intelligence	16 (+2 languages)
Wisdom	9
Dexterity	17 (+2 AC)
Constitution	10
Charisma	15 (+1 reaction)

Combat Skills

Armor Class: -1.

Hit Points: 71.

To Hit Armor Class 0 (THAC0): 5.

Weapon Mastery: dagger (expert, +4 to hit, 2d4 damage, double damage on 19-20, -2 AC vs. 2 attacks/round) and blowgun (expert, +4 to hit, victim Saves vs. Poison at -2).

Wrestling Rating: 24.

Equipment

Weapons: shortsword +2, dagger +3, blowgun, 20 darts +1, and blackjack +2.
Armor: leather +3 and ring of protection +3.
Possessions: flying carpet (for eight people), scroll of protection from magic, thieving tools, and lucky ferret's-foot charm.

Description

Age: 48.
Height: 5'9".
Weight: 165 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: brown (thinning)/gray.
Appearance: Paunchy, but graceful, with a commanding, charismatic air.
Languages: Common, Neutral, Elf, and Dragon.
Alignment: Neutral.

Saving Throws

Death Ray or Poison	2
Magic Wands	3
Paralysis or Turn to Stone	2
Dragon Breath	3
Rod, Staff, or Spell	3

Thief Abilities

Open Locks	108
Find Traps	104
Remove Traps	112
Climb Walls	116
Move Silently	94
Hide in Shadows	88
Pick Pockets	165
Hear Noise	118

XP: 2,680,000.

Money: 6,800 gp.

Prosper: You've never given another name and never needed one. But you only wish you were prospering now! When your political rivals in the Thieves' Guild staged a takeover and ousted you as President, you escaped their assassins only with good luck and a *flying carpet*. Now, down on your luck, with scarcely a few thousand gold left from all your fortune, you seek revenge.

Seeking out your old crony, Theona, you found she's changed quite a bit from the fun-loving battle-junkie of the old adventuring days. Now, she's a righteous crusader for her deity! Still, she seems basically alright, but she sure doesn't like you telling stories about her previous exploits. Why, when you started telling Sir Theobold Redbeard that amusing anecdote about Theona's drinking contest with the band of orcs, she just about bit your head off! Better lay low for awhile — you've always been good at that.

Through Theona, you've come to know her circle of friends: not just Sir Theobold, ruler of this dominion, but that grouchy dwarf, Hogun, and the elf who's as daft as a little girl. You've had dealings with the elves in the past, but she's unique, that's for sure.

That magician, Quentin, is the most foolish of the lot: All that power, which you could use to pull the Guild coup of the millennium, and he just wants to fight! What kind of wizard is that? Maybe you should hint of the greater rewards that his power could bring, and volunteer to advise him.

Well, they're all tolerable. And any of them may be helpful in your quest for revenge, if you approach them at the right time.

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Undead Turning Table

D#: Skeleton and Zombie.
D+: Ghoul, Wight, Wraith, Mummy, and Spectre.
D: Vampire, Phantom, Haunt, Spirit, and Nightshade.
T: Lich and Special.

Saving Throws

Death Ray or Poison	3
Magic Wands	3
Paralysis or Turn to Stone	3
Dragon Breath	4
Rod, Staff, or Spell	2*

*Use -1 when figuring minuses to throw.

XP: 2,300,000.

Money: 23,000 gp.

You heard that holy call to duty. Though you are blessed with great glory and success in the material world, you heeded that call with customary vigor. Leaving your flock to be tended by trusted aides, you have set out from your church in the great city of Whitehall to convert the heathen to the righteous path.

Before you set out on your one-woman crusade, you prayed for spells to further the great cause. As always, you were blessed (all thanks), but the selection of spells was a surprise. They were not quite the ones you'd requested. Truly mysterious motives must be at work here! But yours is not to question. Your faith will be your salvation, as it will be for all true believers.

Your mission, though, has put you amid unbelievers. You sought out Sir Theobold Redbeard, ruler of the dominion of Lighthall, for support and found him locked in the grip of the demon alcohol! Clearly, your mission must begin right at the top! He has been showing attentions to you; perhaps his budding affection can be used to guide him onto the proper path for his own salvation.

And while you're at it, his fellow adventurers — many of them companions of your own dissolute youth — they also must be saved from themselves. The wizard, Quentin, shows an irreverent attitude toward the sanctity of life. Then there's Prosper, former president of the Thieves' Guild; you wish he wouldn't keep reminding you of your heathen youth, but you must stay close by him, in memory of past friendship, to turn him to right thinking.

Even your great spirit must weaken when faced with Theobold's demi-human friends: the dwarf, Hogun and the elf, Laralyn. They're beyond hope of redemption. Poor misguided inhumans.

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You love your city of Lighthall, and rule the dominion as fairly as you can. But the foppish noblemen in your court and these blasted jubilees your subjects keep throwing in your honor all seems dashed unmilitary.

Now, you know people will have their fun. You like fun as much as the next fellow, in a certain limited, military sense. But you fought in Her Majesty's loyal Legions of Alphatia for donkey's years and never needed fancy dinners and testimonials and blasted posh robes and fireworks.

No nonsense in your companions, at least. A dashed fine lot whom you've known for most of your career — dependable, like your old friend, Hogun the dwarf; forthright, like Laralyn, who is alright for an elf; brave, like the wizard Quentin (possibly a bit too brave, that one); honest, all of them, except possibly that fellow Prosper, whom you don't know: he's with the holy woman, Theona.

That Theona — dashed fine woman; sturdy and to the point. There's not a bit of nonsense there. It makes an old soldier think of that empty throne beside him. If only this Theona didn't carry on so about a fellow having a small drink now and again (it's just to clear the head, of course). To hear her talk, you'd think the gods would strike lightning upon every thirsty soul in Norwold.

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Quentin the Aggressive

30th-level magic-user

Ability Scores

Strength	12
Intelligence	17 (+2 languages)
Wisdom	10
Dexterity	15 (+1 AC)
Constitution	15 (+1 hp/die)
Charisma	9

Combat Skills

Armor Class: -1.
Hit Points: 53.
To Hit Armor Class 0 (THAC0): 9.
Wrestling Rating: 28.

Equipment

Weapons: *staff of wizardry* +1 with 8 charges, *dagger* +4, and *returning dagger* +2.
Armor: *ring of protection* +4 and *ring of memory*.
Possessions: *amulet of protection* AC4, *gauntlets of ogre power* (Str. 18, 1d4 damage, +3 to hit), and bandages.

Description

Age: 55.
Height: 5'6".
Weight: 130 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: bald/brown.
Appearance: Skinny, bald man in somewhat dirty robes with a pleasant smile and a piercing gaze.
Languages: Common, Neutral, Elf, and Dwarf.
Alignment: Neutral.

Spells

First Level: *charm person*, *detect magic*, *light*, *magic missile*, *read languages*, *read magic*, *shield*, *sleep*, and *ventriloquism*.
Second Level: *continual light*, *detect invisible*, *invisibility*, *knock*, *levitate*, *locate object*, *phantasmal force*, and *web*.
Third Level: *dispel magic*, *fire ball*, *fly*, *haste*, *hold person*, *infravision*, *lightning bolt*, *protection from normal missiles*, and *water breathing*.
Fourth Level: *charm monster*, *confusion*, *dimension door*, *ice storm/wall*, *polymorph other*, *polymorph self*, *wall of fire*, and *wizard eye*.
Fifth Level: *cloudkill*, *conjure elemental*, *feeblemind*, *hold monster*, *magic jar*, *passwall*, *teleport*, and *wall of stone*.
Sixth Level: *anti-magic shell*, *death spell*, *disintegrate*, *remove geas*, *move earth*, *projected image*, *reincarnation*, and *wall of iron*.

Laralyn Athiliar

10th-level elf (female)
Attack Rank K

Ability Scores

Strength	16 (+2 to hit, damage)
Intelligence	17 (+2 languages)
Wisdom	9
Dexterity	15 (-1 AC)
Constitution	10
Charisma	11

Combat Skills

Armor Class: -3.
Hit Points: 40.
To Hit Armor Class 0 (THAC0): 5.
Weapon Mastery: *staff* (master, +6 to hit, 1d8+5 damage, deflect 3 attacks/round with *Save vs. Death Ray*, -3 AC vs. 3 attacks/round) and *longbow* (expert, +4 to hit, 1d10+2 damage, -2 AC vs. 2 hand attacks/round, delay).
Wrestling Rating: 11.

Equipment

Weapons: *staff* +2, *longbow* +3, 10 *arrows* +2, 5 *arrows of seeking*, and an *arrow of refilling*.
Armor: *banded mail* +4 and a *ring of protection* +1.
Possessions: *elven cloak* and *elven boots*.

Description

Age: 140.
Height: 6'.
Weight: 150 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: white/green.
Appearance: Willowy, lithe, female elf with streaming white hair and a haughty, often mischievous look. She also smells of sandalwood.
Languages: Elf, Common, Neutral, Gnoll, Hobgoblin, Orc, Pixie, and Dragon.
Alignment: Neutral.

Special Abilities

Three attacks or actions per round.
Smash THAC0 10, +18 damage.
Parry and Disarm options.
Infravision, 60' range.
Detect secret doors, 1 in 3 chance.
Immune to paralysis from ghouls.

Spells

First Level: *charm person*, *detect magic*, *light*, *read languages*, *read magic*, *sleep*, and *ventriloquism*.
Second Level: *continual light*, *invisibility*, *knock*, *levitate*, *locate object*, *mirror image*, and *phantasmal force*.

Hogun of Rockhome

12th-level dwarf
Attack Rank L

Ability Scores

Strength	18 (+3 to hit, damage)
Intelligence	12
Wisdom	13 (+1 Save vs. Spells)
Dexterity	10
Constitution	16 (+2 hp/die)
Charisma	9

Combat Skills

Armor Class: -2.
Hit Points: 81.
To Hit Armor Class 0 (THAC0): 1.
Weapon Mastery: *war hammer* (master rating, +6 to hit in hand-to-hand, +4 when thrown, 1d8+5 damage hand-to-hand plus Str. bonus, 1d6+4 damage when thrown plus Str. bonus, -4 AC vs. 3 attacks/round).
Wrestling Rating: 11.

Equipment

Weapons: *war hammer* +3 and *hand axe* +2.
Armor: *plate mail* +2 with *cure wounds* ability and *shield* +2.
Possessions: *ring of fire resistance*, *potion of levitation*, flint and iron, and chisel.

Description

Age: 105.
Height: 4'4".
Weight: 220 lbs.
Hair/Eyes: black/black.
Appearance: Heavysset (even for a dwarf), with a waist-length black beard, crooked nose with prominent scar, and an expression that is usually unreadable.
Languages: Dwarf, Common, Lawful, Gnome, Goblin, and Kobold.
Alignment: Lawful.

Saving Throws

Death Ray or Poison	2
Magic Wands	3
Paralysis or Turn to Stone	4
Dragon Breath	4
Rod, Staff, or Spell	3*

*Takes 1/2 damage from spells; 1/4 damage if saving throw is successful.

Special Abilities

Three attacks or actions per round.
Smash THAC0 6, +21 damage.
Parry and Disarm options.
Infravision, 60' range.
Detect traps, new construction, 1 in 3 chance.

PRE-ROLLED PCS

XP: 2,400,000.
Money: 24,000 gp.

You plan to show them all up, all those scoundrels back in the great dwarven land of Rockhome, those knavish mischief-makers who insinuated you'd gone soft. You: the second-in-command under King Everest! You: owner of the most lucrative mines in the mountains!

You have gained great honor among dwarves. To think that even one enemy could make such an accusation, that even one off-hand remark might be taken seriously — you can't stand the thought of it. You threw aside all your extensive interests; in the end none of them are as important as defending your honor. You are returning to adventuring after all this time to *show* you're not soft!

You responded to an invitation from your esteemed human friend, Theobold, ruler of the dominion of Lighthall, and are here to find new opportunities. Other old friends from many a hard-fought battle are here as well. Quentin the wizard, for instance, is still nobly brave (if a bit headstrong, perhaps). Theona the holy woman certainly has changed her ways since those raunchy days in the past; now she's a solemn crusader for her faith, a woman after your own heart. Not true of her friend Prosper, though — something suspicious about that one: too competent, too self-assured for the mere merchant he claims to be. But he seems alright, for a human.

But they're not all human here. Sad to say, you've been thrown together again with that blasted elf, Laralyn. She's still as flighty as ever, like all her kind. You've given up on her long since.

Still and all, the people here are pleasant company. You had planned on being sullen and glum while proving your courage, but now you think you may actually enjoy yourself after all!

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Third Level: *fire ball, fly, haste, invisibility 10' radius, lightning bolt, and water breathing.*
Fourth Level: *charm monster, growth of plants, hallucinatory terrain, polymorph other, polymorph self, and wizard eye.*
Fifth Level: *dissolve, hold monster, pass-wall, telekinesis, and teleport.*

Saving Throws

Death Ray or Poison	2
Magic Wands	4
Paralysis or Turn to Stone	4
Dragon Breath	3*
Rod, Staff, or Spell	3

*Takes half damage from breath weapons, or one quarter damage if saving throw is successful.

XP: 2,600,000.
Money: 26,000 gp.

So young yet, still so much to learn — that's your attitude. These poor humans, with hardly time in their lives to really learn living, are pathetic, really, but you do your best to conceal your pity. They don't like pity.

Even in your seven-score short years, you've had many an adventure and have shown great skill in combat. You've risen high among the elfen tribes. Have you come too far, too fast? Now and again you hear murmurs of resentment at your quick success. Such insults just spur you to prove yourself all the more and to explore even more of life. Really, so much is waiting for those bold enough to achieve it!

With this thought, you have come to the dominion of Lighthall, where your friend, Theobold, is ruler. It's been only a couple of decades and already he looks old. You've tried to interest him in new explorations, but he's been busy governing. He should have more fun in life.

His outlook is hardly helped by the holy woman, Theona, who's really become a wet dishrag since her high-spirited, early days. She's always talking about her new holy mission. You don't know her friend Prosper, but he sounds nicer than she does.

They're both pleasant company, compared to the dwarf, Hogun. You had to put up with him through many years of adventuring; still, he hasn't mellowed at all. He's still as grumpy as usual. Seeing him here was the least fun of the trip.

The pleasant surprise, though, has been running into your old friend, Quentin. He's aged too, but the years suit him well. He looks more attractive to you than ever.

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Seventh Level: *create normal monsters, delayed blast fire ball, magic door, power word stun, statue, sword, and teleport any object.*
Eighth Level: *create magical monsters, dance, explosive cloud, force field, permanence, polymorph any object, and power word blind.*
Ninth Level: *create any monster, heal, immunity, meteor swarm, shapechange, and timestop.*

Saving Throws

Death Ray or Poison	3
Magic Wands	3
Paralysis or Turn to Stone	3
Dragon Breath	4
Rod, Staff, or Spell	2

XP: 3,450,000.
Money: 34,500 gp.

You've always been unusual among magic-users. Most of them hang back from pitched battles, letting the fighters get all the glory, then meekly creep forward and cast their healing spells after the excitement's over. But you — you love the action, the adventure, the thrill of risking your life!

You've gotten to the age when a magician should settle down into his tower and start doing serious spell research. Yes, you do your share of that (how else did you accumulate such a vast understanding of sorcery?), but you punctuate bouts of study with forays into the darkest corners of the Earth — or forays into the tavern on a rowdy night, if nothing better presents itself.

Basically, you're just spoiling for a fight. You're not proud of it, but you know you like any chance to get in close, throw some whiz-bang combat spells, and — your specialty — a few offbeat, unexpected effects with your own particular slant. Even in a battle, you try to foster an appreciation for an artful enchantment, skillfully cast.

How sad that most of your companions fail to appreciate your artistry. You were called here to the dominion of Lighthall by its ruler, your old adventuring buddy, Theobold. He wanted nothing more than a routine spell to make the wine taste better — a mere clerical stunt! His self-righteous friend, Theona, the fat holy woman, apparently wouldn't deign to do it for him. What a crusader!

Well, you've renewed acquaintance with some other old companions: Hogun the dwarf, stout-hearted above all others, and the elf, Laralyn. She still looks young as ever, and only now that you're getting old do you notice how cute she is. Nothing cute about Theona's friend Prosper, though — that fellow looks suspicious as a smiling kobold.

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After their captivity, the Wizards are too weak to stop the city from plummeting into the sun. The clerics and magic-users in the party are asked to lend their own energies for another attempt — one which may prove hazardous. If the PCs refuse, the entire city is doomed. Needless to say, the heroic PCs should agree to participate.

The attempt should strain the PCs' heroism to the limit — because it is, indeed, quite a damaging task. Read the following section to the magic-users and clerics who agree to the Wizards' request:

You link hands with the Ruling Wizards, and immediately feel agony beyond anything you have ever imagined. It feels like all the heat falling on the island has been concentrated directly behind your eyes.

You get a mental image of the Wizards' arms reaching out toward this island across thousands of miles, from the gray boundary of Eloysia. They grasp the island with fingers as big as mountains, trying to keep it from falling further. They are unable to hold on unless you extend your own arms to help.

You know that if you do, you're in for the same punishment the Wizards felt before. Will you do it?

The rescue works as a series of three rounds. In each round, the PCs involved take increasing amounts of damage: 10 points the first round, then 15, and finally 20. Stress the point that the agony continues to mount to almost unbelievable levels and that anyone has the chance to back out after any round. Give every player involved a chance to gnash his teeth in agony, make heroic resolves to continue, or otherwise show off. Note that the PCs are unable to cast spells while they're involved in the ordeal.

Do not let the players know how many rounds they have to endure this agony! If they stick with it, tell them they feel the island slowing, then stopping, and finally beginning to draw away from the sun.

The help given by the PCs makes the difference to the rescue attempt, no matter how many rounds they endure. The Wizards manage to arrest the city's fall this time, and slowly begin pulling it back toward its place in the outer shell.

Depending on how long they stand the pain, PCs receive XPs for their heroism (don't tell them this until after the city is rescued). Players who withdraw after the first round of damage receive 1,000 XP, those who

bow out after the second receive 5,000, and those who stay to the end receive 10,000. PCs who die because of the damage will be *raised fully* by the grateful Wizards after the crisis is over, and receive a bonus of 2,500 more XP.

Exposition Time

With the immediate crisis under control, this is the time to answer all the players' questions. The Wizards can tell them anything they want to know; some obvious questions are answered in the passages below. Don't bother reading aloud all of what follows unless the players ask all of these questions. Never tell them more than they want to know.

A. "What's Going On?"

Durhan the Conqueror is invading our kingdom of Trann. He persuaded one of our most trusted officials to betray us, then imprisoned us. Durhan thought he neutralized our magic — but only in this realm. We sent our power across the dimensional barriers to your plane. But Durhan found out and bound us even tighter, while sending our city into the sun to prevent our rescue.

"Durhan has always been a powerful sorcerer, but his abilities have increased to monstrous levels recently. We cannot divine the source of his power. All we know is that it is being used for great evil.

B. "What Happened to Our City?"

Durhan's enchantments have run out of control and crossed through the planes. We sensed this; that is why we sent the coins to your plane. When they reached your own realm, your city had already fallen victim to Durhan's enchantments as ours had. The first spell made your city vanish; no doubt the second one has hurled its site into the sky. But now that we have stopped the spell in this realm, your city has also been rescued.

DM's Note: This assumption is mistaken. The PCs' city has not been rescued and is now in deep trouble. The PCs won't discover this until they return, though.

C. "Why Worry About This Particular Site?"

Solius is bound to this land by spell-magic as though it still stood here. It cannot be restored anywhere else. The same is true of your own city.

D. "How Were You Imprisoned?"

Valck, our trusted advisor, betrayed us by drugging us into unconsciousness. When we awoke, we were imprisoned in the vault. With our magic restricted by Durhan's spells, it was all we could do to enchant a few coins. Now we believe Valck is Durhan's personal henchman, and may be leading one of the Conqueror's invading armies.

E. "Where is the Treasure?"

Durhan looted our vaults. We must defeat him and retrieve our national treasures. If you aid us, you will be richly rewarded.

Moving Along

The woman in the white robes, Dyan, thanks you for your help. "But now," she says, "another danger awaits. Durhan's armies were moving to invade our kingdom when we were captured. By now, they may be ready to march — or Trann may already have fallen.

"We must remain here to shepherd our capital city safely back home. But someone must lead the resistance against the invaders. You are our only hope. If you will favor us, we have your transportation."

Dyan gestures overhead: above the horizon looms a huge orange-and-black lump. It rises, getting larger and larger. You see a bulging black eye, along with transparent fins and a long, streaming tail. The object is a living creature the size of a cloud. It looks like a gigantic Chinese goldfish.

"Your steed," Dyan says, pointing.

This creature, the "auratus," is the standard mode of transportation among the islands of Eloysia. It can easily carry the PCs (and a thousand others, when necessary) wherever they wish to go, though not with any great

Chapter 3: ARRIVAL IN ELOYSIA

speed. The auratus is fully described in the Appendix to this adventure.

Auratus: AC 7; HD 600; hp 2500; AT 0; D Nil; MV 120'; Save F36; AL N; THAC0 Nil.

Plot Fixes and Random Encounters

If players feel they have too little freedom of action in this section, you can insert a few surprises with the following encounters.

Don't use these unless they help the adventure, though.

A. The Familiar

Popiel may venture out from Saybrook's dwelling. She can flit from building to building, just in sight of the PCs. If they follow, she grows frightened and tries to lead them far away from the buildings. Eventually she lets them catch her (the DM can resolve the encounter as it would in the dwelling). The time spent chasing Popiel equals the amount

spent in a building. Thus, the PCs must skip visiting one building if they are to rescue the Wizards before Solius hits the sun.

If the players can't rescue the Wizards, Popiel can answer some of their questions and guide them to the next part of the adventure. The PCs must capture their own auratus, however.

B. Aurati

A small family of these massive beasts floats by the island as it nears the sun. Any auratus can be captured if a PC reaches its back and (by a successful Wisdom check) finds the sensitive patch that riders use to guide the creatures. Catching an auratus is a time-wasting venture, though, equalling the time it would take to visit one building.

C. Earthquake

This drastic measure should only be used if the DM feels the players are falling behind. Use it only after the PCs have deduced that the Wizards are held somewhere underground. A small tremor, caused by the island's approach to the sun, rumbles through the ground. If the PCs don't venture down to the Wizards' cell immediately, the passage collapses and the Wizards are killed.

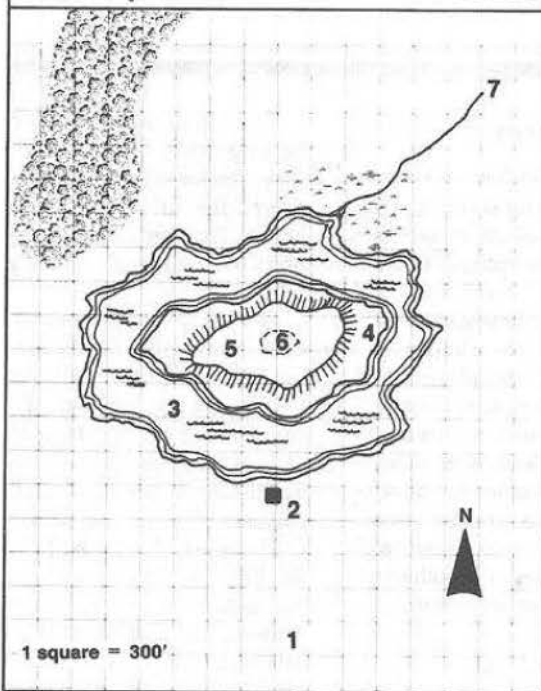
D. Hitting the Sun

As shown in the final section of this adventure, this may not be disaster for high-level characters. Powerful magic can keep PCs alive long enough to allow them to escape the sun. Make sure the PCs have picked up enough clues to know they should next head outward to Trann in this event. Popiel, Drivel, the letter in Saybrook's dwelling, or a divine message in Dyan's temple can provide this vital exposition.



DM Map 6

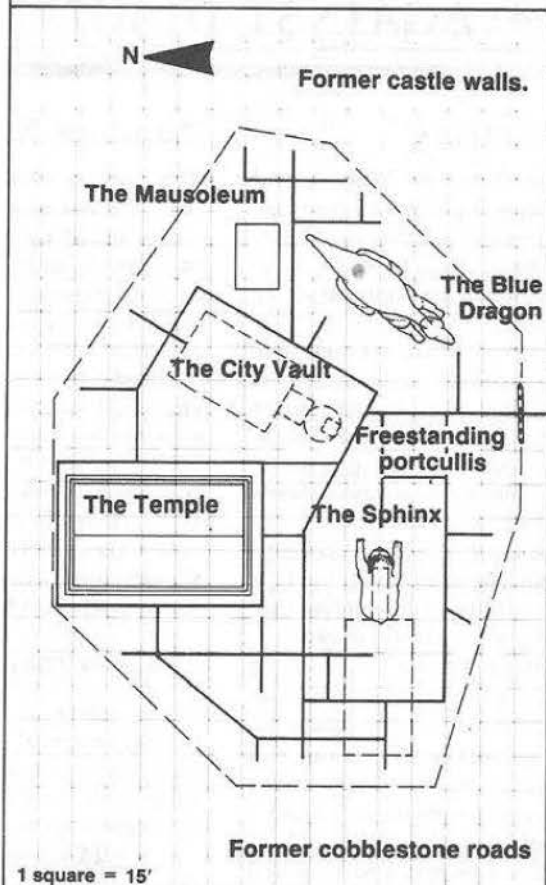
Solius



1. Where the PCs appear.
2. The wishing well.
3. Castle moat.
4. Castle island.
5. Former location of city wall.
6. Former location of castle wall.
7. Small stream.

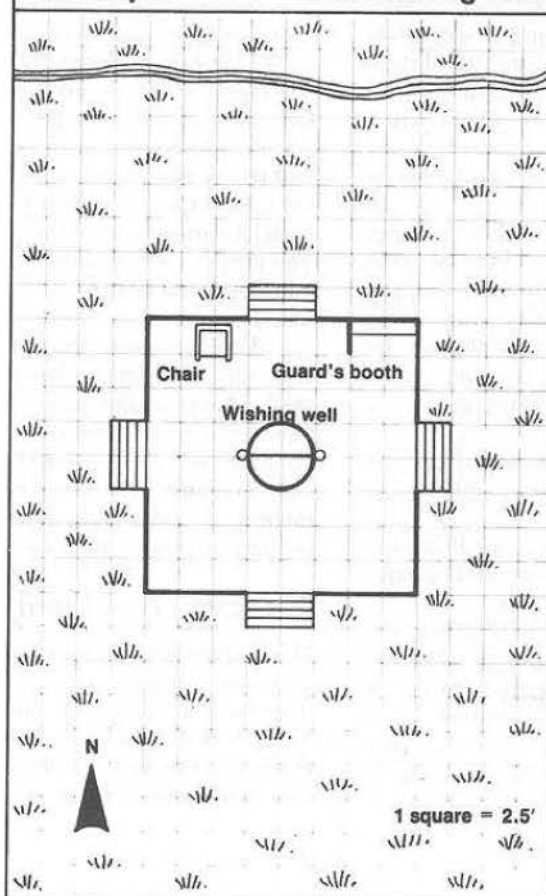
DM Map 7

The Castle



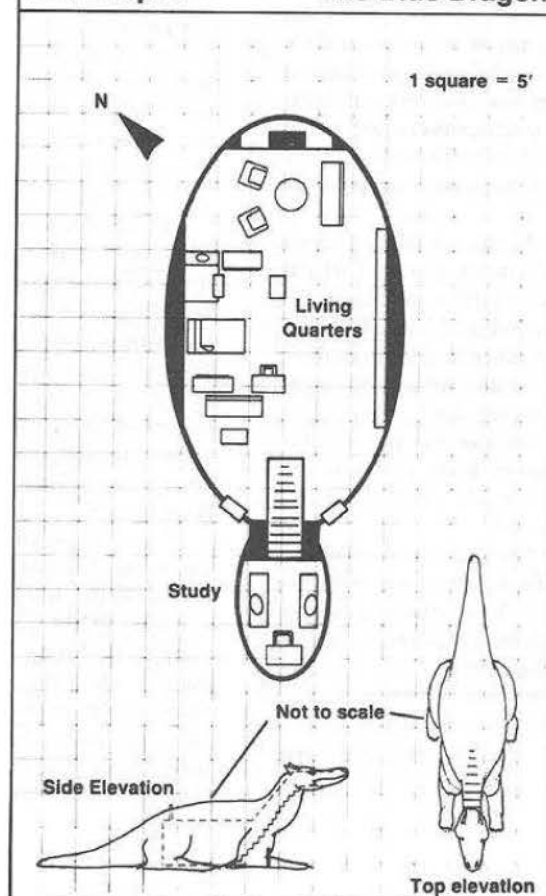
DM Map 8

The Wishing Well



DM Map 9

The Blue Dragon



Chapter 4: AGAINST DURHAN

Encounter Setting

Now the PCs must leave the Wizards and their city site. They move outward from the sun through the three shells of floating islands in the Eloysian system. Their goal: the Wizards' kingdom of Trann, now under attack by Durhan's invading armies.

In Trann, the PCs get to recruit their own forces to combat the invaders. Then, if DM so desires, the optional *War Machine* combat can be played out. This battle will be fought on an offbeat battleground: along a set of enormous metal cables stringing two islands together!

After the battle comes the climactic confrontation with Durhan, after which the PCs return to the Prime Plane — only to find that their most difficult journey is still ahead.

Begin the section by reading the following aloud:

The back of the auratus is wide enough to carry a fleet of galleys and rough enough to provide plenty of handholds. You can control the giant fish-like creature by standing just behind its eyes and kicking at a tiny, sensitive patch on its head. Then you ride in stately fashion between the flying islands, with only a hot breeze to indicate your speed.

The sun is at your back. Before you, in a vast panorama, the islands sail in their orbits against the cold gray background of the plenum. They look like disks of light: some large ones nearby, others just motes in the distance. Everywhere you look, there are more than you can possibly count.

The Wizards told you the islands travel in three shells, each inner sphere of orbital paths nested inside a larger one. From the look of these scorched, red hunks of rock, you must be in the inner shell right now — the one where all the mining is done. Next out is the agricultural shell, with green patches of farmland glowing in the sunlight. Furthest away from you are the islands of the outer shell, where the Eloysian cities are located.

The islands vary in size: some are about the size of a city block, others are as big as entire countries. The combined living area of these thousands of islands must be far greater than Earth's.

Random Encounters

The auratus must stop and rest now and then, anchoring to an island for stability. This means the PCs will have random encounters at various islands in the three spheres as their journey proceeds.

This is an opportunity to showcase the alien nature of this realm and to drop a few enigmatic clues about what the players will encounter later on. Improvise encounters as often as desired and make sure to stress the variety of these islands. Each is a unique realm with its own opportunities for adventure. Nevertheless, try to resolve these encounters quickly; lengthy encounters will slow the pace of the adventure. The following are brief ideas to help inspire invention.

1. Inner (Mining) Shell

These hunks of heated rock are treasure troves of mineral wealth. The inhabitants of islands in the outer shells send miners here. Fire-loving creatures also dwell here. Possible encounters can include the following.

* The PCs encounter a small mining outpost, which is nothing more than a metal tent. All the miners (normal people) wear rusty rings of *fire resistance* for protection from the heat. On six-month tours of duty, they pan for gold and platinum from pools of molten metal. But the money they make barely covers the expenses charged by their brutal employer, an ally of Durhan's named Globus. This mean, calculating skinflint charges the miners for their food and shelter, and rents them the rings that keep them alive — all at exorbitant rates.

The miners work hard, but their lives are harsh and unrewarding. The PCs can help them by locating a big strike — for instance, a bubbling pool of pure platinum deep under the crust of the island, in a cave inhabited by several fire elementals. This lets the miners buy out of their contracts and return to their homes in Volde.

In gratitude, the miners give the PCs their rings in trade for a ride on the auratus back to their homes.

If this encounter is used, the PCs may encounter Globus leading one of Durhan's armies in the *War Machine* battle.

* The PCs encounter a troupe of fire elementals sculpting a mountains of solid iron into incomprehensible shapes. These are works of art, in elemental civilization. If the PCs talk peacefully with the elementals, they meet Sss'f'hkk (SIS-fa-hook), a sculptor famous among elementals.

Though arrogant and vain, Sss'f'hkk can be impressed by the PCs' abilities, should they choose to demonstrate them. Furthermore, the artist is no friend of Durhan, either; Durhan's operations in this shell have often led to the massacre of groups of elementals.

If sufficiently impressed by a display of skill or if motivated to help the PCs' cause against Durhan, Sss'f'hkk presents them with a red-hot teardrop of steel: "a token of my esteem," the elemental explains. By showing this token to the fire elementals they encounter in the final chapter, the PCs can impress them in turn as well.

However, should the PCs threaten, attack, or kill Sss'f'hkk, word quickly spreads through the elemental community across the dimensions, and the PCs will have some fast talking to do if they're identified as the artist's assassins.

2. Middle (Agricultural) Shell

* The PCs encounter a small farmstead on a rock hardly larger than a couple of city blocks. The farmhouse is in ruins and the crops are neglected. In a small dwelling is a weeping family of normal humans. The eldest son in the family was kidnapped by Durhan's forces, and the two elderly parents and the remaining children are too few to continue the raising of their crops.

No one has any idea why the son, Lucius, was captured. The family speaks highly of his budding talent for magic. As they talk of Lucius's powers to make *light*, turn *invisible*, and soothe his parents when they were troubled, the PCs realize that Lucius must have been a natural magic-user of some talent. The DM should promote curiosity about why Durhan would want to take a low-level magic-user captive.

* The encounter above can be repeated with minor variations several times in this shell. Many families have sons or daughters talented in the magical arts; Durhan's armies has impressed them all into service. Stress the brutality and villainy of Durhan's troops; mention episodes of vandalism, plunder, and beatings of other family members.

3. Outer (Inhabited) Shell

Here, there are cultures as old, as diverse, and as interesting as any on Earth. The PCs may have a hard time finding Trann and Volde in the midst of the hundreds of islands floating in this shell. As they search, the DM can run them through a variety of brief

encounters. Examples of encounters follow.

* Up to now, the auratus has been going to the islands, but now one is coming right at it! A city-sized island is flying out of control, clearly out of its usual orbit. As it drifts by at unusual speed, the PCs see people running around in panic and hear their distant screams.

By skillful piloting of the auratus, the PCs can draw up alongside the island and land. The inhabitants, about 200 peaceful villagers led by a portly, keen-eyed sheriff (3rd-level fighter), tell that, for reasons beyond their understanding, their island suddenly flung itself out of orbit. The villagers have no way to evacuate. Will the PCs assist them? The auratus can easily hold the entire population on its enormous back.

If the villagers join the PCs on their journey, an old sage rides close by them. He speculates on the cause of the disaster. Only some unnatural disturbance in another island's orbit could have provoked it, he says. The turbulence this created must have spread through the shell, like ripples on a pond. If the disturbance is large enough or lasts long enough, hundreds of islands may fly from their proper orbits. The whole shell could collapse, causing other shells to collapse and perish likewise.

The island was disturbed in its orbit by Durhan's grappling of Volde to Trann (the PCs will see the attached islands soon). The sage is correct in his assumption: If the grappled islands aren't separated soon, chaos will strike the realm.

* At some point, the party encounters a floating rainstorm. These permanent storms drift throughout the realm, perpetuated by wind patterns and heat convection. Islands drift through them, thus receiving the water necessary to refresh and replenish the environment.

Ordinary storms are much like their Earth equivalents: the clouds resemble large, fluffy cumulus clouds. If the villagers are with the PCs, they view the approaching storm as nothing more than a nuisance. The auratus goes through the cloud unless steered away; in the cloud, it opens its tremendous mouth to drink. The passengers get wet, but there is no other effect from the storm.

This encounter establishes the elements of a typical storm. When the PCs encounter an unusual storm over Volde later in this section, they'll know what to compare it with.

Encounter Key

1. The Approach

At last, you see an island which matches the Wizards' description of Trann: a square-shaped island with mountainous borders, green hills, and bright blue lakes. Gradually, it grows to fill the whole view ahead of you; it seems as though you're hovering over your own home. There is one noticeable difference, though: The whole island seems to be tilted at an angle to the sun, and spins in an awkward manner even as you watch.

You see another island coming into view as Trann rotates slowly: this island is composed of a huge mass of brown and dark green hues, mountains, and very little bodies of water. Both islands appear to be grappled together. Even from miles away, you can spot a network of cables linking the two. Compared to the peaceful stateliness of the other islands, these two islands locked in a slow spin are somewhat disturbing.

As you approach the islands, you find a glimmer of gray in the midst of the kingdom of Trann. It seems to move as you get nearer; slowly, you realize it's a gaping hole, miles deep, going right through the island. Now you can see what look like flocks of large birds flying in close-order above the crater; around the edge, there's a large gathering of people. Where do you want to land?

If the PCs choose to land by the crater, go to Encounter 2. If they want to look at the cables, go to Encounter 3.

The players may want to go straight to Volde. This means they can't participate in the *War Machine* battle. If the DM wishes to run this battle in spite of this action, merely have the Ruling Wizards appear to the PCs in a *clairvoyant* vision, warning them against visiting Volde before they've gathered their full strength. If the DM decides to skip the battle, take the PCs to Volde and turn to Encounter 4.

If the PCs want to land elsewhere, let them; they won't find anything of great interest or anyone to talk to, though, unless the DM decides to improvise something. Random encounters from the preceding sections may be adapted for this purpose.

2. The Crater

The hole in the island is about 20 miles wide. The far edge looks like a thick strip of rock with green above and gray below. You might be looking at the far shore of a lake, for all you can tell.

You bring the auratus down near the crater. Suddenly, there's a flash of light. In an instant, you're surrounded by men with the wings and claws of eagles. They bear flaming swords and look strikingly beautiful.

This company is a group of 20 male archons; they have been practicing maneuvers before the coming battle. Their leader, Coronatus, ordered them to *teleport* to the PCs to learn of their intentions. The archons bear *swords of flame*, which they use against any threat or display of force. Despite their noble appearance, the archons are difficult to deal with; like all their kind, they are intolerably self-righteous and arrogant.

The leader's challenge is routine. The PCs' response should not provoke combat. The auratus is allowed to land in the crater and dock next to the edge. The PCs dismount by sliding or walking carefully down a dorsal fin. Thereafter, Coronatus accompanies or leads the party through the encounter, telling them whatever information they wish if they can "assure me it will be used only for Lawful purposes," he says sanctimoniously.

The archons are inhabitants of another island in this realm. They were summoned by the Wizards just before Durhan's attack and are now debating among themselves whether to take charge in the Wizards' absence.

Archons: AC -6; HD 20*****; hp 90; AT 2; D 3-30/4-24; MV 120'/(40')/360'/(120'); Save C20; AL L; THAC0 5; SA (see p. 40, *Master DM's Book*); SD (see SA).

Coronatus: AC -6; HD 22*****; hp 102; AT 2; D 3-30/4-24; MV 120'/(40'); Save F22; AL L; SA (see Archons above); SD (see SA).

The Waiting Armies

The crater is ringed with the armies of the Wizards. The troops, demoralized by the disappearance of Solius and their leaders, have simply set up camp here and wait to see what happens next. The archons are considering leading the troops into battle, but none of the troop leaders are willing to recognize their authority.

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The Wizards have instructed the PCs to take charge of the armies. The PCs must convince the troops and the archons they have this authority, though, before any will agree to follow. To do this, a PC must get in touch with the Wizards by magical means, asking for a sign to show their approval. This sign can be a dramatic *illusion* or whatever else the DM wishes.

PCs can also rally the armies with heroic accounts of the Wizards' bravery and of their own role in rescuing Solius. Ideally, this speech should mention imminent peril, the need for courage and solidarity in the face of tremendous opposition, the surety of victory, and so forth.

Success can be determined by having the players recite stirring speeches or by simply rolling for the the armies' reaction rolls, modified by the speaking PCs' Charisma, to find out if the oratory is effective. News of the Wizards should favorably modify this roll (add +1).

In a fairly short time, the armies should be cheering, applauding, and spoiling for a fight. Each of the PCs can take command of one of the forces given in the next section. If there are more forces than PCs, ignore the remainder; if there are fewer, create duplicate armies for the extra PCs to command.

Perhaps the archons will go along with this; then again, perhaps not. In the latter event, the archon leader, Coronatus, challenges the PCs' authority, questions their account, and denies their leadership ability. He demands that they prove their mettle: Their champion must face him in trial by combat, with the winner acting as commander of the armies. The armies cheer this exciting turn of events with vigor, and the PCs must go along to retain their loyalty.

One PC faces Coronatus, who is armed with a *sword of flame*. The PC is allowed to use magical weapons and armor, but the archon leader's challenge forbids spellcasting and non-weapon magical items. Combat continues until one or the other opponent is reduced to less than 20 hp. At this point, Coronatus *teleports* away to his lieutenants on the sidelines, calling an end to the contest and casting *cureall* on his PC opponent.

If the PC has won, Coronatus proclaims the victory in such a way that the archon himself comes out looking better: "I could not stand by and see this brave one risk further injury." Use the most self-serving, arrogant, annoying terms manageable in this case.

Considered rationally, a fight between generals of an army could seem silly. If singular combat seems inappropriate at this point in

the story, Coronatus casts *commune* or another spell to verify the PCs' authority, then acquiesces gracefully. This is especially appropriate if the players don't know how to motivate the armies; the archon can drop a few hints to get the speeches going.

After the troops are moralized and mobilized, the PCs should lead them on a march overland to the edge of Trann. (There are too many troops to carry on the auratus.)

3. Grappling Hooks

The scene of the *War Machine* battle is the boundary of Trann and Volde, where most of Durhan's forces have tied the two islands together with enormous cables. If the PCs have come to this encounter leading their armies, read the following aloud. If they have arrived without the accompanying armies, skip the first paragraph.

You march with your armies through the hills of Trann, encountering no one but a few small expeditionary forces of Volde who surrender without a fight when they see your superior numbers. The prisoners reveal that the primary invasion of Trann is to commence shortly.

After a march of several hours beneath a sun at perpetual noon, you arrive at the border of Trann, where Volde is grappled to your island by enormous iron cables. These cables are at least 100' thick and stretch for miles to the rocky island which floats slightly above the horizon. From here, the land of Volde seems dark, grim, and rainy. A thunderstorm covers the far end of the island with clouds.

Durhan's troops are gathered opposite the PCs, on Volde. The PCs' side, Trann, is covered with small expeditionary patrols from Volde. These squads are made up of six 4th-level fighters armed with broadswords, led by a 6th-level sergeant with a bastard sword. They avoid contact with the armies of Trann, but can be surprised and taken by a small party. Captured patrols either refuse to divulge anything valuable or surrender completely and ask to join the PC forces (they aren't any happier with Durhan than the armies of Trann are).

These patrols can be used to drop mysterious clues about Durhan. For instance, none of the captured soldiers have ever seen Durhan. Nonetheless, he's been showing evidence of enormous magical power recently — ever since the thunderstorm appeared over Volde and stationed itself there permanently.

Every magic-using citizen of Volde has been impressed into service by Durhan's troops and has never been seen again; no one knows what happens to them. The squads know nothing else of importance.

If the PCs approach at the head of a large army or if they sail down in plain view on the auratus, Volde's troops are alerted to their coming and immediately prepare for battle. If the PCs land alone in their midst, they are captured and must either escape or sit out the coming battle as spectators. In this latter event, the PCs are eventually rescued and can go on to the next section.

If the PCs come to Volde without armies and take precautions to approach stealthily, they can sabotage or otherwise work mischief among the opponents before the battle starts. The DM must judge the likelihood that a given tactic will succeed. If the action is clever, the stunt may reduce the opposing armies by 5-10% (or more, if the DM so desires).

The Cables

There are as many cables connecting Volde and Trann as there are PC armies. Each cable is solid iron, three miles long and 100' thick. The cables are flat on top and wide enough for a fighting force to walk across abreast. The footing is very good, for the cables are woven of countless strands of iron wire (each of these strands is a few inches thick).

In most cases, there is little danger of falling off a cable. Characters may be thrown off in personal combat; the thrower must make two successful *Grab* maneuvers against the victim or stun him to throw him off. If a character moves off the flat top area toward the sides, a *Dexterity* check is required to stay on the cable.

If a PC falls off a cable, they are not necessarily gone for good. A character is within range of a thrown rope for one round and is within range of magical rescue (*levitate*, *teleport*, etc.) for three rounds.

The cables cannot be destroyed by most conventional means. Acid, for example, would be needed in impractically large amounts to dissolve even one cable. Magical means, such as *fireballs*, are slightly more effective: The missile destroys 1' of a cable's thickness for each 10 points of damage inflicted.

House-sized steel grapnels are anchored solidly in the rocky island of Volde, making it impossible to pull the cables free. Before the battle begins, the PCs should be given a chance to attempt their clever ideas (such as climbing down to sabotage the cables, coating them with grease, and so on). Any PC who climbs down beneath the cable or any-

where near the rocky island, runs into a giant slug of great nastiness.

The character is unable to spot the slug until its first stream of acid hits the cable nearby, leaving a smoking and sizzling hole where the liquid hits. This conjures the notion of PCs dodging around the cable, hoping the slug will keep missing its targets and gradually eat through the cable.

Such flamboyance should not be discouraged, since it makes for exciting play while the battle rages above. Nevertheless, it will take a long time to damage the cable perceptibly, even assuming maximum damage for each hit. If a player wants to try this stunt, assume the slug can spit enough acid to burn through a cable; this takes almost the entire length of the battle, though. The cable can then snap at some crucial instant, sending enemy troops falling into oblivion and securing victory for the heroes with a flourish.

Slug, Giant: AC 8; HD 9**; hp 50; AT 1; D 1-12; MV 60'(20')/30'(10'); Save F5; AL N; THAC0 11; SA spit acid; SD (see p. 38, *Master DM's Book*).

The High-Wire Act

In this encounter, the players control all of Trann's forces. The time unit is one hour. The terrain unit is one mile; thus, forcing enemy troops back three terrain units brings them to the opposite end of a cable and onto an island.

The object of the battle is to drive Durhan's forces back to Volde over the cables, then cut the cables and free the islands. When the players understand the situation, have them gather their armies, roll for initiative, and begin the battle.

In the first round of battle, Durhan's forces arrange themselves so that each force protects one cable. They withdraw onto the cables if the first round goes badly for them. Taking the battle onto the cables means that the PC forces are brought into range of Durhan's lightning barrages (described below).

The constricting width of the cables means that only one PC force at a time can fight effectively on any given cable. If more than one PC force goes onto the same cable, the enemy force freed from assault by this maneuver crosses back onto land and follows the PC forces onto their cable, thus surrounding the PC's forces.

While fighting on cables, no force except the archons can choose the envelop tactic. Forces on land can choose this tactic against forces attempting to cross onto land, however. The archons, as flyers, can employ this

tactic at any time.

Players might want to use the auratus to get their infantry airborne, but no soldier will get on the auratus; they all know that the huge creatures are unfit for war and that they tend to shy at hostile actions, bucking off passengers in combat. A PC might arrange a dramatic diversion, however, using the auratus for shock value. Seeing a colossal goldfish rearing up beside them would certainly require a morale roll for enemy troops!

Lightning Storm

After the battle is in full swing — after the PC forces have committed themselves to a particular course of action — the huge thunderstorm moves across the landscape of Volde, toward the battle with supernatural speed. It arrives at the beginning of the round after the PCs notice its movement. As soon as it arrives, Durhan begins hurling lightning bolts at the forces of Trann.

Durhan the Conqueror lurks within the thunderstorm. He wears the greater artifact known as the *Shadow Belt*, which has allowed him to create the vast magical effects he's achieved so far; it also allows him to throw powerful (20d6) bolts of electricity without effort. The lightning bolts work like the magic-user spell, except that their range has been extended to reach any force in the battle range. Durhan casts one bolt at each PC leader during the battle, usually in an effort to rescue his own opposing force from defeat.

The barrage cannot be dispelled by the PCs, although they do get their customary saving throws for half damage. If the bolts turn out to be too deadly during play or if the battle continues after each PC has been hit once, the bolts stop and the rain begins in their stead.

The rain makes the cables slippery; each PC force must make a mass ability check against Dexterity (described below) for each round they are on the cables. Success means the entire force stays afoot on the wet cables; failure means some part of the force slips and falls to its doom. Forces on land need not make ability checks. The rain lasts until the battle is over.

The check works almost like a regular PC ability check: Roll 1d20 and compare the result to the PC commander's Dexterity number. The only difference is that, if a force fails the check, the amount by which the roll is failed is important.

For each point by which a roll fails, the force takes a 10% loss. For example, a PC commander has a Dexterity of 14, and his roll for the force is 17. He missed by 3, so the

force takes (3 x 10% = 30%) losses.

Player Forces

Force: Player Character #1

Location:

Number of Troops: 500.

Type: All archers with swords.

BR: 95, Troop Class: Good.

Force: Player Character #2

Location:

Number of Troops: 600.

Type: 500 swordsmen, 100 pikemen (+2 weapons all).

BR: 92, Troop Class: Good.

Force: Player Character #3

Location:

Number of Troops: 600.

Type: 450 horsemen with swords, 150 krysts.

BR: 104, Troop Class: Excellent.

Force: Player Character #4

Location:

Number of Troops: 600.

Type: 450 swordsmen, 150 spellcasters.

BR: 100, Troop Class: Good.

Force: Player Character #5

Location:

Number of Troops: 600.

Type: 300 axemen, 300 horsemen with lances and swords.

BR: 92, Troop Class: Good.

Force: Player Character #6

Location:

Number of Troops: 500.

Type: 450 archers with swords, 50 planar spider mercenaries.

BR: 103, Troop Class: Excellent.

Force: Bronze Golems

Leader: None

Location:

Number of Troops: 10.

Type: 10 bronze golems.

BR: 312, Troop Class: Excellent.

The golems are not an independent force; they must be commanded together with some other force.

Force: Archons

Leader: Coronatus (Leadership Factor 26)

Location: Trann

Number of Troops: 20.

Type: Archons.

BR: 504, Troop Class: Excellent.

The archons can attack from the air. They can move between cables to help any friendly

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army in need.

Force: Ruling Wizards

Leader: Dyan, M36.

Location: Solius.

Number of Troops: 5.

Type: 5 Ruling Wizards.

BR: 444, Troop Class: Excellent.

The Wizards may arrive with their city site in true cavalry fashion at any point when the PCs need reinforcements. If the PCs do not need help in the battle, the Wizards do not show up until after Encounter 4.

Durhan's Forces

One of the following forces opposes each PC force. One of the forces is led by a tall, angular nobleman in shiny black armor, who fights with uncommon ferocity. Trann's troops identify him to the PCs as Durhan's henchman, an abnormally powerful metamorph named Valck. Valck is the traitor who poisoned the Ruling Wizards; he's described below.

Durhan's other forces are led by 28th-level fighters (Leadership Factor 30). Durhan does not lead a force in this battle. Durhan's forces are merciless in combat.

Force: Durhan's Legions.

Leader: Valck (LF10)/F28 (LF30).

Location: Volde.

Number of Troops: 800.

Type: All swordsmen in black plate armor.

BR: 110/120, Troop Class: Excellent.

Valck's force should confront the force led by the most powerful PC fighter. This lets the DM stage a face-to-face, single combat between Valck and the (presumably) courageous PC.

Valck offers to stake the outcome of the battle on a single, unarmed fistfight or wrestling match. If the PC challenged accepts, Valck sheds his armor. Combat is resolved normally. If Valck loses, his force reneges on his promise and continues the battle anyway.

During the fistfight, Valck shapeshifts to his most powerful forms: a gorilla, roc, and rock python. This takes one round per change, and Valck always loses initiative on the round he shapeshifts. However, the shapeshift frees Valck automatically from a Grab or Pin. Valck's hp start at 30 and stay at their current level when he changes shape, so he can be worn down gradually.

Valck: AC 5; HD 6*; hp 30; AT 1; D by weapon; MV 120'(40'); Save F6; AL C;

THAC0 14; SA (see IMPORTANT NPC); SD (see SA).

Gorilla Form: AC 6; HD 4; hp 30; AT 2; D 1-4/1-4; MV 120'(40'); Save F6; AL C; THAC0 16.

Python Form: AC 6; HD 5*; hp 30; AT 2; D 1-4/2-8; MV 90'(30'); Save F6; AL C; THAC0 15; SA (see p. 37, *DM's Rulebook*).

Roc Form: AC 4; HD 6; hp 30; AT 2; D 2-5(x2)/2-12; MV 60'(20'/480'(160')); Save F6; AL C; THAC0 14.

If The PCs Lose

If the PCs lose or retreat from the battle, assume Durhan's forces have driven them onto Volde. There, the PCs escape; their forces are destroyed or imprisoned. If they can locate and defeat Durhan, though, the PCs can yet gain victory. Go to the next section and adjust the final XP award downward according to the guidelines given at the end of this chapter.

Reaching the Far Side

At the far end of the cables, firmly built on the edge of Volde, are the cable housings. These two-story stone buildings house the giant anchors for the cables. In *Siege Machine* terms, each building is AC -4(6), 60 hp, and +6 BR. The buildings have no secret entrances or exits.

Each building is guarded by a 100-troop garrison (BR 80, Troop Quality: Good). They never leave the fortifications to assault Trann's armies.

The PC forces have no siege equipment (even if they did, they wouldn't be able to get it across the cables to Volde). There is no time for a prolonged siege, for the imbalance created by the grappled islands must be resolved in a matter of days.

Fortunately, the buildings can probably be reached quickly through magical means, such as through the use of *teleport* to put troops within the walls or *dissolve* to create breaches in the stonework. Likewise, flying characters can drop flaming oil or *fireballs* on the wooden roofs.

Inside each building, the cable is buried deep in the ground with only its flattened top bulging up. Ringed around this bulge are 10 cylindrical iron gearboxes, 10' high, each with a long lever sticking horizontally out from the side. These levers release the cables.

Destroying the gearboxes does no good; the levers must be pushed around the cylinders with a combined Strength of 50. When all 10 levers are pushed, the cable snaps free

of its anchor. All forces on that cable are lost, snapped into a long fall into oblivion.

4. Confronting Durhan

Whether or not the DM chooses to play out the battle, the following encounter provides the climactic conflict with Durhan himself. If the players fought out the *War Machine* battle, tell them their victorious forces reached the far end of the cables and began dismantling them while the PCs journeyed overland to Durhan's stronghold in Volde.

If the previous encounter was not used, read the following aloud:

The battle against Durhan's forces was hard-fought along the cables linking the two island kingdoms. Waves of arrows flew and swords and pikes clattered together along the rain-slick, metal cables where any misstep meant a thousand-mile plunge to death. Many warriors on both sides made that misstep or met their deaths in more conventional ways.

At last, through courage and inspired leadership, your armies prevailed. The cable housings on the far island of Volde were overrun and destroyed. Now, the islands are drifting free again. The fragile balance of forces maintaining the islands in their shells has been restored.

But there is still a battle to be fought. You saw no sign of Durhan himself in the struggle. Captured soldiers told you the would-be conqueror directs the battle from his headquarters, in the foothills near the edge of Volde.

The next section can be read to the players whether or not they played out the previous section.

You travel through the depressing landscape of Volde, searching for Durhan's stronghold. The terrain is like a charcoal sketch of Trann: The grass and leaves are blackened and the trees look burnt. There is no sign of green anywhere. The landscape looks as though a forest fire came through and burned everything, but the burned landscape kept on growing — like a garden of undead plants.

It appears as if no one has lived in Volde for years. You come upon a village with empty homes, untended lawns and hedges, weeds growing everywhere, and not a person or creature to be found. You

see words scrawled on a wall in Eloysian.

There's a big storm cloud ahead. It looks like those permanent storm systems you saw on your way to Trann. The islands drift through them, get watered, and move on. But this one looks different. It's staying with this island, moving as it moves. The cloud you see has stayed over Volde and even moved to bring lightning and rain during the battle.

The message on the village wall says "War has come and we have gone." Durhan's unceasing preparations for war have driven the populace away from the island — the ones who weren't conscripted into the army, that is.

The DM may conduct one or two random encounters on the journey in Volde. Here are some possible encounters in this wasted, war-torn land:

Refugees. Two or three families of hungry, homeless normal people are encountered. The army has claimed all their property; now they seek escape to Trann. The refugees know nothing useful, except that the thunderstorm has lingered over Volde for months now.

Patrol. The PCs encounter 10 6th-level fighters led by a 9th-level commander. The patrol attempts to capture the PCs, then tries to escape as soon as the PCs' power becomes clear. This group knows no more than the refugees, except that Durhan's headquarters are located in the foothills.

Nothing more of interest can be found on land. When the next phase of the adventure is ready to begin, though, a thin, gold wire drifts down from the cloud overhead. It falls in graceful loops and hangs suspended at eye level above the ground, just in front of the PCs. At the end of the wire is an odd skullcap of gold. The wire stretches high above and is lost in the clouds. After a moment, the skullcap moves directly toward the group's nearest magic-user (or cleric, if there is no magic-user; even a fighter with magical weapons will do). The cap and wire detect as strongly magical.

The characters can attack the wire (AC 6, 50 hp), run from it, let it touch them, climb it, or whatever they want. If the wire touches a magic-user, the PC feels a low-grade *mass charm* spell. Of course, all PCs are most likely immune to these effects due to their high level.

The wire withdraws into the clouds. If the PCs do not follow it, the incident repeats every few minutes until they do.

Into the Storm

Eventually, the PCs are expected to *fly*, *levitate*, climb, or otherwise follow the wire up into the stormy sky. Tracing the wire's path several dozen yards up, they soon encounter a branching point where the wire merges with another gold wire that stretches down in another direction. The PCs can continue following the wire up into the clouds or backtrack from the branch point down the other wire.

Backtracking leads down a few dozen yards to the floating body of a low-level magic-user. The wire ends in another gold skullcap attached to the character's skull (too tightly to be removed physically).

The young 3rd-level magic-user is alive, but barely conscious. He is *charmed* to believe Durhan is treating him well, but does allow that Durhan is draining him of his magical energy. This strikes the charmed character as perfectly natural and necessary: "We all think so," he says.

If a PC tries to *dispel* the *charm* spell and the cap's magical attraction, the cap is protected by a 40th-level spell — that is, as an artifact. The spell can also be broken if the wire is cut; the wire is very tough (50 hp), though. Whether or not the spell is broken, the magic-user faints from exhaustion before telling the PCs any useful information.

Magic-Users: AC var.; HD var.; hp var.; AT 1; D 1-4; MV 120'(40'); Save var.; AL N; THAC0 var.; SA spell capability; SD (see SA).

The PCs can continue to follow the gold wire into the clouds, continuing on to points where pairs or trios of wires merge. There is a vast network of gold wire throughout the storm cloud, and each wire terminates at a skullcap attached to a floating magic-user. Almost all the charmed victims are 1st-4th level.

After several branchings upward, the trail culminates in an astonishing sight:

Beyond a gap in the clouds, you find whole networks of gold wires extending in all directions, like veins in a leaf. At the center of this network, like a huge spider in a golden web, floats a 30'-tall man. His limbs and features are hideously distorted, and his expression is a mixture of hatred and agony.

The man wears a gray leather belt around his bony waist, with a shoulder

strap stretched across his misshapen rib cage and twisted spine. The gold wires are attached to the belt and strap. Behind him, you see the wires trailing away to hundreds of floating bodies in the distance.

This, of course, is Durhan the Conqueror.

Durhan and the Artifact

Durhan wears the *Shadow Belt of Orcus*, a greater artifact of amazing power. The artifact leeches energy from magic-users, allowing the wearer to expend that energy in otherwise impossible feats of spell-casting. The vanished cities, the sites thrown into space, the *lightning bolts*, *mass charm* and *levitate* spells cast on all these victims — all of these effects are due to the *Shadow Belt*.

Durhan is wired into 500 magic-users of 1st-21st level. These magic-users have been kidnapped from all over Eloysia. Their energy gives Durhan an effectively infinite number of Power Points to spend. (There's more about the *Shadow Belt* in the Appendix.)

While wearing the *Shadow Belt*, Durhan is immune to all 1st-4th-level spells, charms, mental control, and poison, and to all spells which cause instant destruction. Durhan was a 36th-level magic-user before donning the *Shadow Belt*; with it, he can cast any and all magic-user spells of any level, repeatedly and without limitation. The sole exception are *wish* spells, which were intentionally placed beyond the power of the *Shadow Belt* by Orcus. Druid and clerical spells cannot be cast with this artifact, however.

Non-attack spells can be amplified in effect by this artifact. For example, a vastly increased *telekinesis* spell allowed Durhan to remove Solius from Trann. Other possible effects are as follows:

* *Walls of stone, ice, fire, or iron* can be constructed of indefinite size.

* *Polymorphing* large numbers of objects at once is possible (for instance, meteors of a *meteor swarm* cast against Durhan can be altered).

* Monsters of 40+ HD can be created via a *create monsters* spell.

These amplified spells cannot directly affect an enemy. Attack spells have their usual effects. For example, a *fireball* from the *Shadow Belt* never does more than 20d6 hp damage.

The unpleasant side effects of wearing this artifact are obvious: Durhan's huge, distended form is clearly painful to him, and the storm itself is a direct by-product of the *Belt's*

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activity. Crazed with power-lust, however, Durhan puts up with all this agony to conquer Eloysia.

Defeating Durhan

Unless the PCs take extraordinary magical measures, Durhan is certain to spot them before they get anywhere near him. If the PCs break a gold wire, Durhan is aware of them immediately; otherwise, he sees them through the eyes of any conscious magic-user attached to the *Shadow Belt*.

Durhan is insane with hatred for everyone and everything. Negotiating or reasoning with him is useless. Durhan may not attack immediately, but only delays to study the party and its powers. If the party talks before attacking, Durhan takes the opportunity to cast defensive spells such as *mind barrier* and *immunity*. He never casts *force field*, *prismatic wall*, or *anti-magic shell* on himself, since these spells would interfere with the power drain through the *Belt's* gold wires.

Durhan's attack begins with 20d6 lightning bolts and fireballs, followed by a meteor swarm. He continues by creating a large dragon or two (any choice of color), putting vulnerable PCs into mazes, and creating explosive clouds. When wounded, he casts *timestop* and *heals* himself completely.

How can the PCs defeat such a monstrous foe? The only way is to cut off Durhan's power supply: the magic-users wired to the *Belt*. By cutting, breaking, or dissolving a wire, the PCs cut Durhan off from all the magic-users attached to that wire. This reduces his power. If the PCs can cut loose all the magic-users, they reduce Durhan to the powers inherent in the *Belt* itself and thereby wear him down to defeat. (Give the PCs an Intelligence check to discover this, if the players can't figure it out themselves.)

The wires form a great branching network centered on Durhan. Only 10 wires attach directly to the *Belt*, but these 10 divide into five each a few dozen yards down, becoming 50 branches (call this the first branch.) These 50 wires divide into five each further down, making 250 (the second branch). Finally, these 250 split into pairs (the third and last branch) for a total of 500 wires attached to the imprisoned magic-users.

Each length of wire has 50 hp and can be destroyed by any reasonable means. Clearly, the closer to Durhan the wires get, the more magic-users each wire connects to the *Belt*. A wire that is destroyed before it branches (i.e., one that is next to the *Belt*) frees many more magic-users than a wire destroyed farther down in its path.

The problem is that the closer a PC gets to Durhan, the more vulnerable the PC is to attack. At the first branch or closer, a PC is at +5 AC due to close range; attacks by Durhan do +50% damage. Out to the second branch, the penalty is +2 AC and +25% damage. Beyond the second branch, there is no further penalty and after the third branch, extreme range gives each PC a -2 AC bonus (no effect on damage).

Don't bother keeping careful track of the *Belt's* exact PP totals as the magic-users are freed. Simply have Durhan cast spells of noticeably lower level and of significantly less damage as the wires are destroyed. Each wire cut provokes a howl of rage from Durhan, and he shrinks perceptibly after a few wires are gone. Each additional wire cut shrinks him a little more.

After three or four wires are destroyed, Durhan no longer *heals* himself quite as well; when all the wires are destroyed, Durhan doesn't *heal* at all. Also, he's left with only 200 PP for the rest of the battle. The party can now fight Durhan in a straight slugfest.

Durhan: AC -4; HD M36; hp 56; AT 1; D up to 20d6; MV 360'(120'); Save M36; AL C; THAC0 5; SA (see IMPORTANT NPC); SD (see SA).

When Durhan is reduced to 25% hp or less, a contingency spell cast earlier *gates* the NPC to the Outer Plane ruled by Orcus. The PCs are prevented from following by Immortal magic. If the contingency spell has been *dispelled* or doesn't work for some reason, one of Orcus's minions intervenes to tear the *Belt* from Durhan to prevent it from falling into the PCs' possession. The DM should allow Durhan to escape if possible so he can recuperate and become a continuing nemesis in future adventures.

With Durhan's defeat, the thunderstorm breaks up quickly. The magic-users are freed, but now are falling helplessly! Play out a few heroic rescues by the PCs and have the Ruling Wizards return in time to catch the rest. If the PCs themselves are falling or are stranded on Volde now that the cables are broken, the Wizards send the auratus to catch them and bring them to a gentle landing on Trann.

If The PCs Lose

If the players lose the battle with Durhan, assume he killed them all in the conflict. Read the following aloud:

You awake on a grassy hill. The Wizards stoop over you, looking relieved. "You live again," says Dyan. Beyond her, a crowd of soldiers cheers. The air smells fresh and cool. The sky may be gray, but it looks as beautiful as anything you've ever seen.

The Wizards quickly tell what passed after Durhan defeated you. With Volde's armies strengthened and the storm raging more strongly than ever, Durhan seemed unbeatable. The Wizards and all of Trann fell into despair.

"But then," says Dyan, "in the clouds, we saw a brilliant white light, followed by an explosion. The storm cleared within minutes, and Durhan's armies dissolved with its clouds. No one has found any trace of Durhan."

"We were completely bewildered," she continues, "until we were visited by — well — a friend." Her voice drops, so that the crowds can't overhear. "Our friend told us that he hadn't known of Durhan's power or of his abuse of an artifact. Only by your efforts was Durhan forced to expend so much power that he came to the notice of our friend."

The Wizards have *raised* the PCs fully in gratitude for their efforts. They are very cagey in discussing the "friend," and don't wish to reveal too much about the Immortals.

If any PC has already acquired a patron Immortal, identify him or her as the Wizards' friend, the agent of Durhan's destruction. If not, the heroism the PCs displayed should lead to an Immortal encounter soon, and the path to Immortality awaits.

Proceed to the next section, but decrease the party's XP award by 10% to reflect the defeat.

5. The Triumphant (?) Return

Here, the PCs are rewarded, loose ends are tied up, and the players almost certainly feel the adventure is wrapped up. Let them think so — the hard part is still to come!

With Durhan defeated, you're welcomed back to Trann with cheers from the multitude. The Ruling Wizards congratulate you warmly on your victory and usher you personally to the site of Solius. The site has been restored, with hardly a seam or crack to show it had been removed. But there's still no sign of the city.

But as you and everyone else watch, the Wizards link hands once again and float into the air. There, they chant strange incantations; suddenly, the air feels warm. There are noises around you: crowds and shouts come from nowhere.

Vague outlines shimmer into view: buildings, paved streets, towers on the horizon. The Wizards chant louder overhead, and the outlines grow firm, then solid. Troops jump out of the way of walls and carts, which appear where they stood.

With the chants reaching a climax, huge crowds of people and animals appear from nowhere. The people are frozen like statues in mid-step, on stairways, or climbing up onto horses. Then, as if with the snap of a finger, they're moving and matching the sounds.

You're standing in the middle of a crowded city, a beautiful city of soaring towers, marble buildings, and wide streets lined with plants. The people stop in surprise to stare at you, the troops, and the Wizards who are floating back to the ground.

The rest of this scene is made up of excited questions from the returned citizens (nobody remembers disappearing) and gratitude from the Wizards, who are happy to grant most reasonable requests by the PCs. However, they do ask for their personal items back — the ones the PCs took from their strongholds in the previous section. In any event, the Wizards quell the PCs' concerns over the fate of their city by giving assurances that (to the best of their knowledge) Lighthall should also have been restored by the Wizards' spell.

DM's Note: This assumption is mistaken — but don't let the players know that! Roleplay the Wizards' calm assurance that everything is all right.)

After explaining the heroes' role in rescuing the Wizards, Solius, and all of Trann, the Wizards bring the PCs down to the treasure vault beneath their castle. Here, the PCs are rewarded with the gold and XPs they've earned through the adventure.

Awarding Treasure and Experience

Here are two methods for awarding treasure and XP. The DM may choose either one or use a method of personal devise. The award assumes a party of six characters and a gain of one level per three adventures. To modify the award, consult the *Dungeon Master's Companion*, pp. 2-3 and 26-27.

Method 1: Bulk Award

With this method, the Wizards simply award the PCs 13,000 pp from their treasure vault to be divided up as the players wish. Because of the great bulk of this treasure, the Wizards also provide a *bag of holding* to carry the payment in (holds 10,000 pp, but weighs only 600 cn when full).

At the DM's option, each Wizard may also elect to give one magical item to the PC who carried his or her coin during the adventure. Warrick gives a ring with a *wish*, Jacaine gives a valuable potion, Kendall some illusion-related gift, and the others give any item deemed reasonable. If the PCs looted or vandalized a Wizard's dwelling, that Wizard gives no gift; similarly, if the PCs killed Popiel or destroyed Drivel, no gifts are given.

Method 2: Achievement Award

With this method, reward the players for achieving individual goals during the adventure and for good role-playing. The physical nature of the reward can be platinum pieces or magical items, as above.

Keep track during the adventure of which goals on the list below the PCs accomplished and total their XP values (along with the usual XP for defeated monsters) to find the final award. Some goals have negative XP values, indicating poor play.

Divide the award equally among the PCs, then award each an XP bonus as appropriate for clever ideas, acting in character, and furthering the story. This bonus should be from 1-5% of the group's total XP award. Try not to leave anyone out when awarding these bonuses — almost every player contributes something to an adventure.

Objectives

PCs acted intelligently while city vanished: 5000 XP.

Each coin found (except copper): 10,000 XP.

Healed Granite: 5,000 XP.

Answered sphinx riddle: 2,500 XP.

Fought sphinxes: -5,000 XP.

Buried diver ghost's body: 5,000 XP.

Met spiders peacefully: 2,000 XP.

Got globe at wishing well: 2,500 XP.

Befriended Popiel: 3,000 XP.

Killed Popiel: -5,000 XP.

Found wall maps in sphinx: 2,500 XP.

Got potion from Drivel: 2,500 XP.

Made offering at temple: 2,500 XP.

Passed vault traps: 3,000 XP.

Helped Wizards rescue city: Varies (as noted earlier).

Defeated Coronatus: 5,000 XP (to individual PC).

War Machine battle:

10,000 XP (if they won).

3,000 XP (if they lost).

Defeated Durhan: 25,000 XP.

Roleplayed a coin's behavioral modification well: 3,000 XP (to individual PC).

Killed, looted, unnecessarily: -2,000 XP (per instance).

Back to the Prime Plane

With the villain defeated and their treasure awarded, the players may be thinking events are winding down to their inevitable conclusion. Soon the session will be over and they'll start deciding who rides home with whom.

Try to develop this impression with a casual attitude, lulling any potential suspicions. Don't actually tell the PCs that their own city is safe; say the Wizards are sure everything is okay. In fact, the Wizards even offer to send one of their own number back to the Prime Plane with the PCs, just to make certain. (If the Ruling Wizards were not rescued, a high-level magic-user freed from Durhan's imprisonment can fulfill the same function.)

Which Wizard will go? That's up to the DM and the players; whichever one has been the most fun to play or whichever the players have had the most fun dealing with should be the choice. For convenience, the read-aloud sections assume only one Wizard goes along, although two or more could decide to make the trip.

When the PCs are ready to return home, read the following section aloud. At the actual moment of return, hit them with the surprise.

You're set to return home with your new wealth. The Wizards gather around you to cast their *gate* spell. Strange lights flicker around you and a freezing wind surges up from the ground beneath. A glowing haze wraps itself around you and your mouths go dry. The haze gradually clears, and you see your familiar blue sky overhead.

And then you fall!

You're falling through mid-air in a tremendous crater some 20 miles across and a mile deep. You're high up in the middle with nothing around you, falling faster by the second. What do you do?

Let the players try whatever they wish. If it sounds good, it works; it would be bad form to kill them with this fall. If nobody has a way to fly (unlikely), the Wizard who accompanies them casts a *levitate* spell which sets them

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gently on the bottom of the crater.

This is, of course, the site of the PCs' city, which vanished in the first chapter. After the PCs departed for Eloysia, Durhan's spell continued in this plane just as it had in the Wizards' plane. The site of the city was torn from the ground and hurled toward the Sun. The Wizard explains this, if the players don't figure it out.

Is the city destroyed? "No," the Wizard tells them. "Ironically, the same enchantment that caused the city to vanish also protects it from physical harm. The site is traveling toward the Sun or perhaps has already reached it; but the land will be unharmed." (Players may justly tell the Wizard, "You were wrong before," but this time

the Wizard is right.)

Now what? Perhaps the players are ready to write off the whole city. If so, the Ruling Wizard can point out that they have great power. They can reach the Sun. They can survive and move in its interior. They can — they must — journey across millions of miles of space, to rescue their city.



Chapter 5: INTO THE SUN

Encounter Setting

The physical statistics are staggering: a diameter of nearly 900,000 miles, a surface area larger than 12,000 Earths, a million times the volume of our world; in the interior, 400 billion atmospheres of pressure create a density far greater than solid steel. Top this off with a temperature of 27,000,000(o) Fahrenheit at the core and you have one tough opponent. The Sun will truly challenge a party of Master-level PCs.

In this section, the PCs must journey to the center of the solar system to rescue their city. Only courage and the most powerful spells can keep them alive in the Sun's infernal interior.

The challenge as DM is to dramatize an inconceivably large and dangerous setting. Virtually everything the PCs encounter will be of a scale that dwarfs the Earth itself! Try to help the players grasp what is, almost by definition, beyond comprehension.

Survival in Space and in the Sun

To start this chapter of the adventure, let the players decide how they will make this journey.

Perhaps a catalog of assets is in order. The coins from Eloysia are no longer magical. The treasure from the vaults of Trann must be left on Earth. Since high-level spells are required, the party may need an extra Ruling Wizard; their companion can summon as many others as may be necessary. If the party doesn't have a high-level cleric, one can come along with the Wizards (use the statistics for the cleric in the center pull-out section of this module).

Next, let the players review what their characters will have to deal with. Space is cold, black, and empty. Unprotected characters suffocate in a minute or two, freeze solid in another few minutes, or decompress implausibly within seconds. The clerical *survival* spell protects completely from both the rigors of space and the hellish solar interior.

Travelling from Earth to the Sun in any practical time requires either special equipment or a well-cast *teleport* spell (a *wish* can be used with this spell to affect an entire group of characters). PCs can only *teleport* to the surface of the Sun, though; trying to reach the interior counts as *teleporting* into a solid object.

Other spells, such as *travel*, transport the caster very slowly. If the PCs have no way to *teleport*, the DM may opt to increase move-

ment rates for such spells outside the Earth's atmosphere by a factor of a million. Even then, the party may need days or weeks to cross the 93 million miles of vacuum to the Sun.

Once at the Sun's surface, the characters have another 450,000 miles to go to reach the core (and *teleport* spells won't work now). To keep the adventure moving, assume *travel* or a *wish* can transport the party as far as 100,000 miles a day. The increase in speed can be explained by the vast magical and physical energies which the Sun generates.

To find out where they need to go, the PCs can use a *find the path* spell, specifying their city as the location. Feel free to drop a hint about this to the players if necessary or have them make ability checks against Intelligence to get the idea.

In the solar interior, *survival* protects the characters from harm and allows them to see normally in the blinding light. A *force field* provides full protection from heat, pressure, and gravity, but it must be renewed frequently unless it is made permanent.

Once in the *force field*, characters need some method of propulsion. Gravity is no help, for the PCs soon reach gas that's too dense for them to move through. *Fly* or *levitate* works, as does magical items like *flying carpets*. *Teleport* will not work and *travel* only works for one character at a time. A *wish* can move an entire party from one encounter in the sequence below to the next consecutive one, but no further. Other methods of transportation may work, however, as the DM wishes.

During this section of the adventure, the PCs should always be aware how close they are to death. Should their magic be *dispelled*, they will die instantly. However, the PCs' location has some bearing on their fate. On the surface of the Sun, the temperature can dip as low as 5,000(o) F. — even lower in a sunspot. A body may endure as long as 10 seconds before being incinerated, and so may be retrieved and *raised*.

In the solar interior, temperatures soar into the millions of degrees. If a character's *survival* spell lapses or if his *force field* is *dispelled*, the victim is vaporized instantly, beyond hope of resurrection by human magic.

Random Encounters

There are no encounters in outer space, but the Sun itself is inhabited by many creatures, such as those of the Elemental Plane of Fire.

Because of its size, the Sun's population is sparse; it's entirely possible that the PCs will encounter no one as they journey to the core.

If the DM wants to spice up the adventure, a meeting with one or more fiery creatures may be arranged. Appropriate Immortals from the *Immortals* book can be used here; they are immediately aware of the PCs' intrusion in their domain and assist or obstruct them according to the motives of their Spheres. Even without Set 5 of the rules, interesting side-trips can be developed for the players. Here are some suggestions to serve as inspiration:

1. Phoenix

The PCs see a huge, flaming bird flying above a plume of fire. The phoenix is not intelligent, but is relatively tame due to an absence of natural enemies such as humans. The PCs may befriend it and may convince it to return to assist them if they need help later on; likewise, the PCs may have nothing better to do than kill the phoenix. If so, the sun instantly consumes the feathers of the phoenix before the PCs can obtain any.

Phoenix, Greater: AC - 2; HD 18*****; hp 90; AT 3; D 2-12 (x2)/4-24; MV 150'(50')/450'(150'); Save F20; AL N; THAC0 6; SA (see p. 41, *Master DM's Book*); SD (see SA).

2. Sunspot

Sunspots are mysterious storms that appear periodically on the Sun's surface. Relatively cool by solar standards (only 4,000(o) F.), they are marked by intense magnetic fields.

PCs who run into a sunspot may find their metal armor and equipment behaving strangely. The effect is up to the DM: metal could twist into scrap, fly away along magnetic force-lines, or become strongly magnetized itself.

3. Solar Flare

This awesome light show should throw a scare into the players. A flare erupts within 10,000 miles (a hair's breadth) of the PCs while they're near the Sun's surface. Within a minute, they see a colossal wave of burning gas rolling toward them; mention that their *force field* might collapse unless it's fortified.

What happens next is up to the players. Magic-users and clerics might try ability checks against Intelligence and Wisdom to marshal their energies and strengthen the field; otherwise, allow a check against Dexterity to pilot the field above or below the onrushing wave. Fighters might even try to prop up the field with sheer brute strength!

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Build suspense, let the players try what they will, then let the flare hit. Roll percentile dice, examine the result, and announce that the field has held.

4. Other Encounters

Many fire creatures inhabit the Sun. The PCs may run into efreeti (lesser and greater), flame salamanders, helions, or random fire elementals. The PCs do not encounter conventional Prime Plane monsters that can't stand the heat (this includes undead). Any creature encountered should have a logical reason for being here.

Encounter Key

1. Chromosphere

If the PCs are travelling through space to reach the Sun, describe the vast, empty blackness, endless starfields, and the great circle of the Milky Way. When they arrive at the Sun, whether by *teleportation* or protracted voyage, read the following aloud:

You're in the surface region of the Sun. You hang in utter emptiness, with nothing in sight. Enormous clouds of gas surround you, glowing orange like a low fire, but they look extremely distant. You crane your necks all the way back, looking straight up, and still can't tell where the clouds end overhead.

All around you is pure white light. You see a distant yellow horizon beyond the gas plumes.

This layer of the Sun is so thinly distributed that it qualifies as a very good vacuum on Earth. PCs can never reach the gas plumes they see in the distance; they're inside one as they arrive and simply can't tell! Speech is impossible; here, as in all the later encounters in the solar interior, PCs can only communicate mentally.

If the PCs aren't magically protected within a round of their arrival, they die, plain and simply. If they are protected, their magic reveals that the city they're here to rescue is in the Sun's interior, far below.

2. Interior

Unless they have begun moving under their own power, the PCs soon realize they're falling. This is the time to stage random encounters; otherwise, continue reading aloud:

You sink into the Sun. Pure white light surrounds you, as does a rumbling sound so deep that you feel it more than hear it. As you go deeper, the rumbling gets louder and higher in pitch.

After a while, you notice that things colored red grow darker in color. It's as if they're fading to black. Orange items look yellower and purple items turn blue. As you descend further, the orange fades to black too. The light around you takes on a strong yellowish green tint.

The gas inside the Sun is growing hotter and is producing shorter wavelengths of radiation. Longer wavelengths, at the red-orange end of the spectrum, disappear; as a result, items that reflect those wavelengths (that is, are colored red or orange) end up black, absorbing all wavelengths.

PCs with infravision find that they can no longer sense the heat of the solar interior. Only other characters show up in the infrared.

As they go deeper, the PCs find the solar radiation shifting higher up the spectrum. The light grows green, then blue; everything that isn't blue or violet grows black. Thousands of miles down, the characters see nothing but violet light (the rest of the radiation produced is ultraviolet, X-rays, and gamma rays).

Since the PCs know nothing of wavelengths of light, all of this will be very eerie to them. Players can take this as another opportunity to role-play their reactions.

3. Pillars of Flame

During their journey down, the PCs notice occasional pillars of flame resting on dense patches of plasma. If they investigate, they discover that the pillars are huge housing complexes for fire elementals. Blobs of fire (the residents) float in and out through the walls.

Each complex holds about 100 elementals. They are rude and are suspicious of PCs who are not in elemental form themselves. The elementals know nothing of the PCs' city; on a favorable Reaction Roll, mention that the Ruler in the core of the sun might be able to help. (Note that only telepathic communication is possible in the deafening roar of the Sun.)

Fire Elementals: AC -3; HD 18*; hp 90; AT 1; D 3-30; MV 360'(120'); Save F18; AL N; THAC0 7.

The PCs who are communicating with the elementals must make ability checks against Charisma. Success means the elementals trust the PCs enough to mention an odd series of robberies plaguing the complexes. Food has been taken from nearly everyone. No one has found out who is stealing the food.

If the players choose to follow up, they can gain entrance to a burglarized cubicle in the complex. Spells such as *find the path* or a *wish* lead the PCs to another pillar complex nearby. Here, the burglar, a fire salamander, is caught in the act stealing food from another cubicle. The salamander never attacks and tries to flee when discovered.

This salamander is the Fire Elemental Ruler's pet. It got lost many months ago and now steals food to survive. If the PCs capture it, they find a talisman around its head identifying its owner (in the language of the elementals).

The PCs meet the Ruler at the climax of this adventure. Delivering the pet safely to the Ruler guarantees a favorable reaction. However, if the PCs injure the salamander, the Ruler reacts negatively. If they kill the harmless beast, the Ruler banishes them from the Sun and the quest to retrieve the city is lost.

4. A Meeting

Eventually, near the core of the Sun, the PCs magically sense that their city is nearby. The city was not burned; ironically, the same enchantment that made it vanish has also protected it from physical destruction. However, it certainly has no future unless the PCs can rescue it.

What you're passing through now is denser than solid rock. Overhead, a 400,000-mile-deep sea of gas presses down on you. Nothing but the paper-thin *wall of force* holds it back. Outside the wall is boiling whiteness.

Your spell tells you that the city is nearby. Then you bump against something.

This obstacle is the city site. The PCs magic tells this to them or the DM may make finding this out a puzzle. How do the PCs see through gas denser than lead? *Truesight* works; *mass invisibility* makes the gas transparent; *move earth* creates a tunnel through it, revealing the island site.

All these methods may reveal the city's new occupants, too; the DM may want to

startle the players, though, by reading this aloud:

You find you've hit the land once occupied by the city. It seems to be unharmed. Then there's a knocking sound on the *force field*.

The whiteness outside the field pulls back, and you're surrounded by globes of fire. From nowhere, three huge rings of fire appear and settle down around you. You're locked inside a cage of flame. In your minds, you hear a single question: "Who trespasses?"

The PCs are surrounded by large fire elementals; the rings are helions. Make it clear to the players that there are more than they could hope to defeat. Here in the center of the Sun, conditions are similar to the Elemental Plane of Fire. The elementals are more powerful than those ordinarily encountered anywhere on the Prime Plane.

The fire creatures are more curious than hostile, but any attack causes the helions to *dispel* the *force field* and *survival* spells protecting the party, dooming them instantly.

If the PCs elect to parley with the elementals telepathically, great diplomacy is called for. The elementals are intrigued by the land that arrived in their domain; they see little cause to let it be taken away. Let the negotiation continue as long as it's entertaining. The elementals then decide to carry the case to a higher authority at the core of the Sun.

Helion: AC 1; HD 9*; hp 50; AT 1; D 2-16; MV 90'(30')/240'(80'); Save F9; AL L; THAC0 11; AL C; SA (see p. 40, *DM's Companion: Book Two*); SD (see SA).

5. Core

The PCs either arrive here escorted by the elementals in the previous section or they blew it, died there, and now find themselves resurrected

here. All their magical protection is *dispelled*, replaced by that of the inhabitants.

You are in the center of a large, hollow sphere. The wall of the sphere is pure black, but reflects the firelight from legions of elementals surrounding you.

You're floating a foot or so above what appears to be the palm of a giant, fingerless hand. Looming above the hand is a burning arm as thick around as a redwood tree. Beyond the arm, extending high above and below you, is an immense humanoid form wrapped in flames. Its face, a blank expanse of fire, stares down at you. In your minds, you hear its voice: "What brings you from the realm of cold?"

This, of course, is the Fire Elemental Ruler: 160' tall and as powerful as the DM wants it to be. Attacks are senseless; the Ruler simply repels them.

Fire Elemental Ruler: AC -15; HD 80***; hp 600; AT 2; D 12-144; MV 120'(40'); Save F36; AL L; THAC0 1; SA (see p. 40, *Master DM's Book*); SD (see SA).

Now the PCs must make their most eloquent pitch to rescue their city. The Elemental Ruler is fair-minded, just, polite, and perhaps a bit amused by the PCs' predicament. He entertains pleas for help, as well as arguments for why he should return the city to its rightful inhabitants. He is also formal, aloof, and not very well disposed toward "cold things" (the PCs).

The DM may have the players actually make their speeches, allowing the Ruler and his court to be swayed according to their eloquence. The DM may also use a Reaction Roll for the Ruler to determine this success swiftly (the roll is influenced by the PCs' Charisma and actions). A Friendly reaction means the Ruler frees the city. The Ruler and

his minions never attack, but a bad reaction means the PCs lose ground and should try another tack. If the PCs retrieved the Ruler's pet salamander safely, they are automatically favored.

Once the Ruler agrees to free the city, he magically transports the PCs back to Earth along with their city. The Wizards restore the vanished buildings and populace easily, then return to Eloysia to deal with their own problems. The way seems clear for celebration.

Aftermath

Make the players feel as triumphant as possible. Build their expectation to the fantasy equivalent of a Macy's parade when the characters have restored the city.

Imagine their frustration and chagrin when the restored populace shows no memory of what happened after the first of Durhan's lights approached in Chapter 1. What's more, no one believes the PCs' accounts of what happened!

Just when the players have given up hope that their egos will get any stroking for all their effort, wind things up with a spectacular finish. If the PCs didn't alienate the Elemental Ruler, he suddenly appears at the city limits, calling to his new human friends. Before the dumbstruck citizens, he congratulates the PCs on their successful mission and advises the populace to honor them profusely.

Then, while people are still trying to recover from this, a familiar white light streaks through the city toward the PCs. Panic, commotion, and suspense follow: Is the city going to vanish all over again?

This white light plunges to earth at the feet of the PCs. There, shiny and cool to the touch, lie a set of coins: platinum coins, one for each PC, each imprinted with the face of a PC on one side and a group portrait of the Ruling Wizards on the reverse. The coins' mottos read (in the common tongue) "Courage: Greatest of all treasures."



NEW MONSTER

Auratus

Armor Class:	9
Hit Dice:	100-600
Move:	120' (flying)
Attacks:	Nil
Damage:	Nil
No. Appearing:	1-12
Save As:	F 36
Morale:	6
Treasure Type:	Nil
Alignment:	Neutral
XP Value:	5,000

This gigantic animal, among the largest mortal creatures known, is found only in the Plane of Eloysia. It resembles a Chinese goldfish with protruding black eyes; scales of white, black, and orange; and flowing, transparent fins. Males have a spiny, brightly colored upper fin which females lack.

Adult specimens are typically 600' long, though males as long as 800' have been sighted. They are about as intelligent as horses, and some mounts form loyalties to particular riders.

The creatures are usually docile, completely harmless, and are used as transport animals in Eloysia. Only during their mating rituals, which occur every five years or so, do males display aggressive nature. Though fairly long-lived (usually over a century), aurati reproduce slowly, and are thus highly prized.

In the mating ritual, all aurati of breeding age migrate to the center of the Eloysian system, to within a few miles of the sun's surface. There, they pair off, mate over the next three weeks, and the males return to their normal life. The females swim slowly out to the plenum boundary of the system. By the time their pilgrimage is over (months later), they are ready to give birth to their young, which are always born singly. The new parents and their offspring then swim back near the system's center, after which the young are weaned and ready to live on their own.

The aurati have no natural enemies. They feed at infrequent intervals (every month or so) on vast quantities of porous rock found throughout the inner shell. This rock, when combined with the water of Eloysia's perpet-

ual rainstorms, generates hydrogen gas (which the fish store in their abdomens) and nitrogen. Aurati propel themselves through the air by expelling the nitrogen through gill-like vents behind the abdominal storage areas.

Because they gain their buoyancy from hydrogen, aurati can be somewhat explosive by nature. The creatures instinctively fear flame, except during the mating rituals above the sun's surface. Their hides are extremely fireproof, though, and their human owners also take precautions to prevent fiery mishaps.

Slaying an auratus is a matter of getting on its back and hacking away for hours — an action which is about as challenging as chopping down a tree. Consequently, the XP award for these creatures is very low.

NEW ARTIFACT

Shadow Belt

Created by the demon ruler Orcus, the *Shadow Belt* is known in the legends of a hundred planes of existence — though thankfully not on the Prime Plane. Orcus has subtly engineered its frequent disappearances and rediscoveries, partly as a way to test likely candidates for Immortality in the Sphere of Entropy.

Durhan is the latest candidate; he has already failed his test. Durhan lacks the self-awareness necessary for Immortals. His invasion of Trann has endangered the entire realm of Eloysia. Even if he is aware of this, he cares not — Durhan is crazed with lust for power.

The *Shadow Belt* is a simple leather belt with an iron buckle. It has a gray, leather strap that fits over one shoulder and crosses the chest like a bandolier. The belt changes size to fit any wearer.

Carved on the belt and strap are disc-shaped symbols. When the wearer touches a symbol and concentrates, a gold skullcap appears from the symbol, attached to the belt by an infinitely extendable gold wire. The belt can produce up to 500 of these caps, which are used for its *power drain* ability.

Magnitude: Greater artifact.

Power limits: 4/A, 3/B, 3/C, 4/D.

Sphere: Entropy (Death).

Suggested Powers (PP 485):

A1	Lightning bolt	60
A2	Mass charm	75
A4	Power drain (see below)	
B2	Clairvoyance	25
B3	Levitate	15
D3	Immunity	100

Activation: The *Shadow Belt* is activated when a user puts it on. The belt extends countless hair-thin filaments that grow through clothing or leather armor into the wearer's skin, literally melding to the host's body. The filaments will not grow through metal armor, and the belt does not activate until the filaments have grown into the host's body. Thereafter, the belt can't be removed until the host dies or reaches Immortality.

Use of Powers: Knowledge of the belt's powers is acquired when the belt is activated. Each power is triggered by mental command alone and does not require continued concentration.

The *power drain* ability is unique to the *Shadow Belt*. Unlike other artifacts, it does not regenerate Power Points itself. Instead, it leeches power from other beings or its host to regain PP. A victim must be willing or *charmed* and a gold cap and wire from the belt must touch the victim's body.

The belt regains 1 PP per day for each level of the victim. (Normal people count as 1st level for this purpose.) A victim is drained of vitality while wearing the cap and can take no action. The helpless victim may suffer from lack of food or sleep while being drained, but is otherwise unharmed once the cap is removed.

Suggested Handicaps (3):

1. When first used: Alignment changes to Chaotic.

2. Size change: Wearer grows 1-4" a day while wearing belt. Maximum height is three times normal. Body becomes horribly distorted at large sizes. No damage (except unceasing agony) while belt is worn; when removed, victim shrinks to normal size, taking 1d6 damage per foot shrunk.

Suggested Penalty (1): While any power is used, a heavy storm arises, centered on the user and continues while the power effect lasts.

IMPORTANT NPCS

The Ruling Wizards

36th-level magic-users

AC: -2 S: 14
Class/Level: M36 I: 18
Hp: 60 W: 17
No. Attacks: 1 D: 17
Damage: up to 20d6 C: 14
Move: 120'(40') Ch: 18
Save As: M36
Morale: 12
Alignment: Lawful

The Ruling Wizards who summon the PCs to the Outer Plane of Eloysia have ruled their kingdom of Trann together for over a hundred years. Their mastery of magic has made them the most powerful of mortals. Their just rule has made them among the most respected and loved, as well.

Together the Wizards are the most powerful force in Eloysia. Among them, they have memorized every known spell several times over. They often use *wishes* for adroit expansions of spell effects. They all wear various magical rings, bracers, and amulets that raise their ACs to -2. They often carry *staves of power* or *staves of wizardry*. As rulers, they can draw upon enormous non-magical resources.

Though all the Wizards share a deep love and sense of responsibility for their kingdom, their character and appearance differ greatly.

Dyan, the informal leader of the group, is a tall, willowy woman with a queenly manner. She appears to be in her mid-forties (though, like all the Wizards, she's centuries old). Perhaps it's her great skill in the magic of summoning and control that has produced her somewhat haughty attitude. The arrogance is only superficial; Dyan loves her kingdom and her fellow Wizards.

Jacaine, the gloomiest of the group, often laments the failure (so far) of his quest for Immortality. His plump appearance shows he hasn't let such morbid thoughts interfere with his appetite. Jacaine's alchemical mastery has produced many potions to aid the Wizards.

Saybrook is bold, bluff, and vital — and some say headstrong. He has adopted the blue dragon as an emblem after a great battle in which he petrified one and made it his headquarters. His familiar, Popiel, has taken the form of a dragon herself. Saybrook looks quite young and strong. His bearing is noble, his manner jovially aggressive. His special aptitude is shape-changing magic.

Kendall, oldest and perhaps wisest of the Wizards, is an elderly-looking woman whose bright eyes are the only indication of her keen

Intelligence. Otherwise, she dresses in rather scruffy robes and behaves with unusual eccentricity — even for a wizard. The other Wizards have learned to tolerate and love Kendall, but for everyone else, her gadfly manner can be irritating. Her specialty is illusions.

Warrick is also elderly in appearance, with a gray beard and robes that sometimes seem to bear the dust of the grave. His manner (for all the wisdom of his expression) is a bit eccentric. Warrick talks a lot about inner serenity and cosmic awareness. He has a great affinity for *wishes*.

Durhan the Conqueror

36th-level magic-user

AC: -4 S: 17
Class/Level: M36 I: 18
Hp: 58 W: 16
No. Attacks: 1 D: 18
Damage: up to 20d6 C: 16
Move: 120'(40') Ch: 18
Save As: M36
Morale: 12
Alignment: Chaotic

Durhan rose to power in the kingdom of Volde through a long sequence of brilliant military victories, ruthless backstabbing, and fearless (even foolhardy) experiments with the darkest forces of magic. His researches roused the attention of Orcus, an Eternal Immortal of the Sphere of Entropy.

Orcus arranged for Durhan to "accidentally" discover his powerful *Shadow Belt*, as a test of Durhan's readiness for Immortality. But the artifact drove Durhan insane, and now his crazed power lust endangers all Eloysia.

Durhan remains an overwhelming opponent despite his madness. Even without the *Belt*, he is formidable, and can make an ongoing nemesis for any campaign. As ruler of Volde, he has long since acquired every known spell for his spellbooks. His resources, both in the plane of Eloysia and elsewhere, are immense.

Most importantly, he has the grand turn of mind that makes an insane tyrant truly dangerous. Overland invasions of other kingdoms were thought impossible in Eloysia, because each is a floating island in its own orbit. But with the power of the *Belt* and the enslaved labor of his subjects, Durhan constructed an incredible network of grappling cables to literally link his land with Trann.

Though Orcus is likely to take back the *Belt* if Durhan is defeated in this adventure, the

Conqueror will probably live to fight again, and his schemes will always be marked by this dramatic, insane scope.

When he's not wearing the *Belt*, Durhan's normal magical equipment includes *bracers of protection AC 1*, a *ring of protection +4*, and at least one fully-charged *staff of wizardry*, as well as many minor potions, scrolls, and other items. He has access to all the possessions you might expect of the ruler of a powerful kingdom.

Once quite handsome, Durhan has grown to a gigantic, distorted monster since donning the *Belt*. He will never fully recover from the disfigurement. In the past, he behaved with confidence, cool and ironic politeness, and ruthless amorality. He may recover much of that eventually, but since donning the *Belt*, he has become a raving lunatic.

Valck

Metamorph

AC: 5 S: 12
HD: 6** Intelligence: 15
Hp: 30 W: 12
No. Attacks: 1 D: 12
Damage: by weapon C: 18
Move: 120'(40') Charisma: 8
Save As: M11
Morale: 10
Alignment: Neutral

Valck has served many masters in his checkered career. Once the trusted servant and advisor of the Ruling Wizards, Valck betrayed them to Durhan the Conqueror to become Durhan's minion. If that doesn't go well, Valck will betray Durhan and head for greater opportunities elsewhere.

In his natural form, Valck is short, stocky, and very pale, with pure white hair and eyes. His pose of arrogant superiority never falters, nor does his taste in clothing, for he is always fashionably attired, whether in the court or on the battlefield. He is far tougher than other metamorphs.

Though completely amoral, Valck is a powerful shapeshifter and capable fighter. His mercurial shifting of form has made him the winner in many unarmed combats. He has become overconfident in his ability, though. With a taste for the broad gesture and the dramatic ultimatum, Valck is likely to challenge any foe to single combat — even a clearly superior opponent. If the fight goes against him, he first tries to cheat, then to escape in one of his many flying forms.

For more about metamorphs, see p. 35 of the *Master DM's Book*.

COMBINED MONSTERS STATISTICS CHART

NAME	AC	HD	hp	AT	D	MV	AL	THACO	BOOK	SA	SD
Archons	-6	20(6)	90	2	3-30/4-24	120' (40') 360' (120')	L	5	M	Yes	Yes
Athachs	0	14*	70	4	2-24 x 3/2-20	180' (60')	C	8	M	Yes	No
Aurati	7	600	2500	—	Nil	120'	N	—	—	No	No
Bronze Golems	0	20**	110	1	3-30 + special	240' (80')	N	5	X	Yes	Yes
Coronatus (NPC)	-6	22(6)	102	2	3-30/4-24	120' (40') 360' (120')	L	4	M	Yes	Yes
Devilfish											
Acolytes	6	1	6	2	1/1	120' (40')	C	19	M	No	No
Priest	6	2*	12	2	1/1	"	C	18	M	Yes	No
Curate	6	3*	18	2	1/1	"	C	17	M	Yes	No
Bishop	6	4**	24	2	1/1	"	C	16	M	Yes	No
Patriarch	6	5**	30	2	1-4/1-6	"	C	15	M	Yes	Yes
Matriarch	6	6***	36	2	1-4/1-6	"	C	14	M	Yes	Yes
Vampire	6	6(6)	40	2	1-4/1-6	"	C	14	M	Yes	Yes
Dragon, Blue	-4	20(4)	105	6	3d10+8(x2) 1d10+3(x4)	150' (50') 360' (120')	N	5	C	Yes	Yes
Durhan (NPC)	-4	M36	56	1	up to 20d6	360' (120')	C	5	—	Yes	Yes
Fire Elementals	-3	18*	90	1	3-30	360' (120')	N	7	C	No	No
Ruler	-15	80***	600	2	12-144	120' (40')	L	1	M	Yes	Yes
Ghost (Diver)	-2	14(4)	80	2	aging/paral	90' (30')	N	8	C	Yes	Yes
Ghost (Drivel)	-2	14(4)	70	2	aging/paral	90' (30')	N	8	C	Yes	Yes
Helion	1	9*	50	1	2-16	90' (30')	L	11	C	Yes	Yes
Magic-Users (NPCs)	Var	Var	Var	1	1-4	120' (40')	N	Var	B	Yes	No
Manscorpions	1	8**	50	2	3-18/1-10	240' (80')	C	12	C	Yes	No
Men, Normal	9	1	4	1	1d4	120' (40')	N	20	B	No	No
Mountain Giant	0	16*	56	1	5-50	150' (50')	N	7	M	No	No
Phoenix, Greater	-2	18(5)	90	3	2-12 x 2/4-24	150' (50') 450' (150')	N	6	M	Yes	Yes
Popiel (NPC)	-4	2	8	—	Nil	360' (120')	L	—	—	No	No
Slug, Giant	8	9**	50	1	1-12	60' (20') 30' (10')	N	11	M	Yes	Yes
Sphinx, Male	0	13(5)	78	3	3-18 x 2/2-16	180' (60') 360' (120')	N	8	M	Yes	No
Sphinx, Female	0	12(5)	60	3	3-18 x 2/2-16	180' (60') 360' (120')	N	9	M	Yes	No
Spiders, Planar	6	6**	30	1	2-12	180' (60')	L	14	M	Yes	Yes
Valck (NPC)	5	6**	30	1	by weapon	120' (40')	C	14	M	Yes	Yes
(Gorilla form)	6	4	30	2	1-4/1-4	120' (40')	C	16	B	No	No
(Python form)	6	5*	30	2	1-4/2-8	90' (30')	C	15	B	Yes	No
(Roc form)	4	6	30	2	2-5 x 2/2-12	60' (20') 480' (160')	C	14	X	No	No
Wizards (NPCs)	-2	M36	60	1	up to 20d6	120' (40') 360' (120')	L	5	—	Yes	Yes

(4), (5), or (6) indicates the creature has 4, 5, 6 asterisks after its HD.



Effect on Behavior: You are attuned to the rhythms of the entire plane. You're prone to a highly spiritual awareness — finding galaxies in grains of sand and eternity in an hour. You have an ideal opportunity to show the other characters in the party how to meditate and achieve inner serenity.

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Effect on Behavior: You feel high-spirited, boastful, and ready to challenge any questioning of your abilities.

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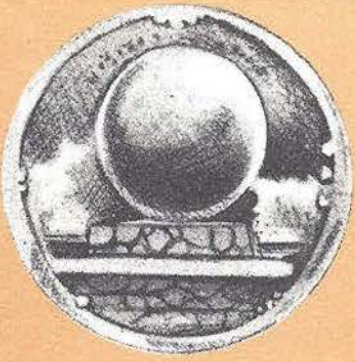
Effect on Behavior: You have no qualms about puncturing a rival's pretensions with a harmless prank. Affect an amused skepticism toward any overly serious endeavor. Basically, be a gadfly: biting, annoying, provocative.

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Effect on Behavior: You feel gloomy. Think how short our lives are! Your existence — everyone's existence — could end in a moment. No one else seems to realize this! You should alert people to their mortality through a little doomsaying.

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Effect on Behavior: You have a streak of haughtiness — or more politely, a great deal of self-confidence. You should be ready to charge any foe, greet every noble as an equal, and disdain to take guff from anyone.

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The Copper Coin

Description: This is a copper piece about an inch in diameter. One face shows an elderly, bearded man with a wise expression. On the reverse is a picture of a castle, which is underscored by a motto in a language you cannot understand.

Power: You can locate, with great precision, the other four coins that arrived with this one. You have an instinctive feeling about which direction they're in and sometimes you can sense instructions from their makers.



The Silver Coin

Description: This is a small, finely crafted silver piece. On one side is the profile of a young man with a high forehead, a noble nose and chin, a full head of hair, and a faint smile. On the reverse is a dragon. Its proportions make it look very young, almost babylike.

Power: You may *polymorph* yourself (as the magic-user spell) three times a day for up to an hour each time. The shape assumed can be smaller or lighter, but no larger or heavier than your own size. You don't acquire any special abilities of the new shape except natural ones. For instance, if you become a crow, you can fly. But if you become a gorgon, you cannot turn anyone to stone.



The Electrum Coin

Description: This is a large electrum coin of excellent craftsmanship. On one side is a picture of an elderly woman. Her eyes are alert and her chin is held high. Her hair is tied back in a tight knot. The reverse shows the outline of a city and a motto in a language you cannot understand.

Power: You may cast mental illusions that appear real to all the senses of the viewer. No illusion may be larger than you are. You can deceive any given individual once per day with one illusion. You can specify which person or monster in a group sees what illusion. For example, a bandit leader might see an approaching sheriff, but other bandits in the group could see something different — a fleeing cat, dusk, or a tuba. You always see and control all the illusions your victims see.



The Gold Coin

Description: This gold coin is slightly tarnished, but well-made. The portrait side shows a balding man with plump cheeks, heavy-lidded eyes, and a gloomy expression. On the reverse is a stately building that resembles a crypt. The motto is in a language you cannot understand.

Power: You may create potions up to three times per day by touching the coin to or dropping it into a small quantity of liquid. The liquid is instantly transmuted into a potion of your choice. Just one dosage of potion is created; larger quantities of liquid merely dilute the effects.



The Platinum Coin

Description: This is a heavy platinum coin. It is obviously very valuable. The woman shown in profile on one side has a stately expression and looks like a queen or noblewoman. The woman appears to be in her mid-forties. On the reverse is what looks like a simple stone block: perhaps some kind of altar.

Power: You may control any one creature (up to 40 HD) per day, up to the next midnight. Your victim gets a Saving Throw vs. Spells to avoid your control, but you can keep trying once a round if your attempt fails. You must see your victim to control its actions. The controlled creature cannot be forced to kill itself. You can't fight or cast spells while controlling others, but you can move up to half your normal rate.





Master Game Adventure

Five Coins For A Kingdom

by Allen Varney

In an instant, the city of Lighthall vanishes from your very midst! In its place come five coins of amazing powers — powers to transport you to a realm of fantastic worlds and incredible magic. In this realm, islands float in air and vast armies battle at the brink of oblivion. The return of Lighthall depends on the defeat of one man: the evil enchanter, Durhan the Conquerer.

Surrounding himself with the armies of Volde, Durhan musters his strength for the final assault on Trann. Defeating Durhan insures the preservation of Eloysia. Saving Lighthall, however, is another story. Lost in the raging core of the sun, the city balances on the edge of destruction. The rescue of Trann, its Ruling Wizards, and Lighthall itself all depend upon the powers of the coins — and the brave adventurers who take the quest upon themselves.

This adventure is for use with the **DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®** rules, and cannot be played without the **D&D® Basic, Expert, Companion, and Master Sets** produced by TSR, Inc.

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