

# REALMS OF ARKONUS

## The Magic Balance

by Thomas J. Scott & J. Allan Fawcett



An eccentric wizard experimenting with planar travel has upset a critical balance in the Realms of Arkonus. With magic in Arkonus gone awry, can the PCs find the cause and restore the balance?

An adventure module for 6 characters levels 10 - 12.

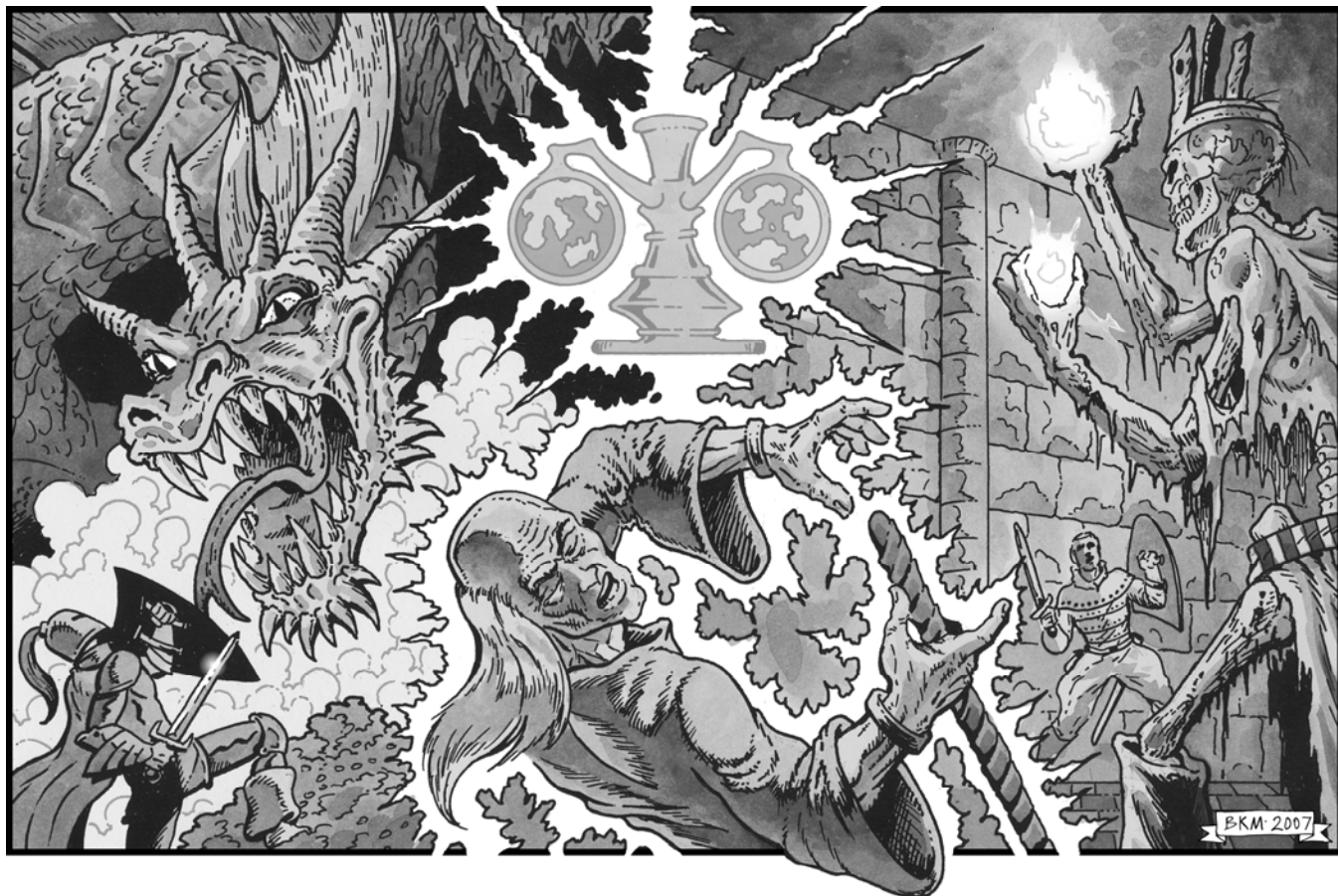
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## INTRODUCTION

**RAM4: The Magic Balance** is an **OSRIC™** compatible adventure module for a group of six characters levels 10 - 12. The adventure is also suitable for use with any system compatible with First Edition. This module is set in the **REALMS OF ARKONUS FANTASY CAMPAIGN SETTING**. The **REALMS OF ARKONUS FANTASY CAMPAIGN SETTING**, published separately by Magique Productions, Ltd, is useful, but not required for play.

The **Magic Balance** was an official tournament module used at Michicon '92. This version has been adapted to the **REALMS OF ARKONUS FANTASY CAMPAIGN SETTING** and contains revisions that were not part of the original module.

### **STOP!**

*This module is for the Game Master's eyes only. If you are going to be a player in this adventure, you should stop reading now!*

### **ADAPTING TO YOUR CAMPAIGN SETTING**

The **Magic Balance** can easily be adapted for use in any existing campaign setting. The town of Ruyun can be replaced with a similar town in your own campaign that is close to a marsh or swamp as well as a large forest.

### **MODULE CONVENTIONS**

Text that should be read aloud to the players will be italicized as follows:

*This is text that should be read aloud to a player.*

Read-aloud text may be read verbatim or paraphrased as you feel necessary. All other text should remain confidential or revealed to the players through investigation and discovery.



## GAME MASTER'S BACKGROUND

Shronk was a well meaning wizard who never desired to harm anyone or anything. He was a curious fellow, however, and burning curiosity such as his always seemed to lead him into trouble. An outcast by his peers, Shronk has studied the arcane arts in seclusion for many years. Of late, Shronk has been experimenting with various aspects of plane travel. The existence of other planes has been an accepted fact for many years and actual adventures to alternate planes have been documented, but they are rare indeed. Even rarer would be to find someone who was an authority on the subject. Portals to other planes have been found and, in some unique situations, even manufactured by calling upon great magic. However, the number of individuals who have commanded such powerful magic is infinitesimal. Poor, misguided Shronk with the mind of a genius and heart of a child has surpassed them all.

Shronk began his unique studies by taking trips to many of the world's finest libraries and visiting many a learned sage throughout the world. At first his pursuits were trivial, but Shronk absorbed information so rapidly that he soon began postulating theories and drawing conclusions that appeared in no textbook. In magic circles he was the laughing stock, a bumbling buffoon not to be taken serious, but in reality he had become, by default, the world's only authority on plane travel. It was only a matter of time before Shronk was able to construct scrying devices to view the different planes. In time, Shronk had mapped a great deal of the planes and could explain their relative locations, varieties of creatures in existence there, physical aspects, and much, much more.

Very recently, Shronk stumbled upon his greatest discovery. While attempting to view a new area, Shronk located the existence of another plane which appeared to be linked to Arkonus via a small demi-plane. He was unable to see into the plane, but knew that it could not be reached without first traveling to the demi-plane. Shronk knew that conjuring the magic necessary for opening a portal would drain a great deal of energy from his body. In his old age, it could mean his own death for even making the attempt, but Shronk's curiosity was too great. He had to know what lay on that alternate plane and he was willing to risk everything to find out. Shortly, he began gathering the necessary materials to open a portal that would take him to the demi-plane.

As has been Shronk's misfortune in the past, his curiosity led him to great disaster. His presence on the unusual demi-plane caused the breakage of a divinely created **magic balance** which served to steady the magic of two worlds which are in close proximity, but on different planes. The accident hurled the two sides of the scale in opposite directions; the good half landing in the small town of Ruyun in the Realms of Arkonus, and the evil half landing in a thickly wooded forest on the World of Alaris. Shronk was immediately expelled from the plane and found himself several miles from his home by the shore of Lake Ganyur. As expected, a great physical drain was exerted over his body causing Shronk to age many years. It seemed impossible that Shronk could return himself to his hometown of Poelir (Pay-leer), but somehow he managed to make it.

It was only after Shronk arrived in Poelir that he discovered he had been propelled several days into his own future. Activity in Poelir was chaotic and Shronk soon learned of the

reason: all magic in the known lands had suddenly become unstable and unpredictable. The wizards feared casting even the most elementary spells since disastrous events had befallen others who attempted to do so. It broke Shronk's heart to see his land in such dire straits, but it hurt him even more when he knew that "he" must be the cause of the problem. Disheartened and mournfully sorry, Shronk humbly approached his wizard peers and recounted the story of his most recent experiment.

## PLAYER CHARACTERS BACKGROUND

*It has often been said that magic is the life-blood of Arkonus. It is a source of great power; wisdom, healing, defense, and offense. Without it, many fear that life would hardly resemble what you know it to be. Once only a theory, now that theory is being put to the test. Seven days ago, suddenly and without warning, magic began to fail. Its use has become unpredictable and unstable. Magic-wielding creatures are hesitant to call upon their sorcery for tragic incidents have befallen others who have attempted its use. The very fabric of the world seems to have been affected by the magic imbalance as weather patterns have become erratic and so-called "natural" disasters have increased since the first signs of failing magic.*

*The only place in all the Realms that is now unaffected by the magical fault is the King's Castle, Palmeeron, of Poelir; a place that has been partially shifted to another plane and now serves as a mobile base from which the wizards of the castle have been inspecting the lands in search of the cause of their dilemma. After some searching, each of you has been contacted through various channels and brought to Palmeeron to see the Elder Mage, Rufus Kaylik. You stand together in a large chamber within the Castle of Palmeeron, the king's lofty abode. Rufus Kaylik stands before you dressed in flowing robes of blue velvet; several of his peers are nearby. Rufus looks at each of you with sympathetic eyes and then begins very slowly, "I'm afraid there is very little I can tell you about what you must do. In fact, I must make it very clear that we don't even yet know exactly what it is that has caused this tragedy to befall us. However, as you know, stories have been spreading about miraculous events taking place in the town of Ruyun. We believe that such "miracles" could only have been accomplished with the aid of ultra-powerful magic. If true, I suspect that this magic, albeit good, "must" be central to our current dilemma."*

*Rufus pauses for a moment and then turns to look directly at the leader of your group. "I believe that you have the honor of leading this distinguished group. Would that I could give you more help in this difficult undertaking, but I and my colleagues are completely powerless to assist you. I am trusting on your sound judgment to lead this party to success."*

*Suddenly, a giant mage, crouching to enter the chamber through a far doorway, comes to Rufus. He is human-appearing, but his height, well in excess of nine feet, is obviously unnatural. He bends down to speak to Rufus.*

*"Excuse me, sir, I just thought you should know that Shronk is awake and babbling madly again."*

*Rufus turns to you with an awkward smile. "I'm sorry. It seems that I am needed. I will leave you to make your preparations for the journey. Barmayus and the others will assist you in*



**getting whatever you require.” Rufus and the gargantuan human head for the chamber’s exit without another word.**

If the party lets Rufus leave without further explanation, the mage will not give one. He and the others are embarrassed by Shronk and will not reveal his involvement unless the PCs inquire about him. Stopping Rufus before he leaves and asking about Shronk will get the party a very quick, choppy explanation as to who he is, but will not include an admission of Shronk’s involvement. A further inquiry must be made before Rufus will ashamedly mention Shronk’s planar experiment and Shronk’s own belief that it was the failed experiment that may have caused the magical disaster. As to Shronk’s babbling, Rufus will explain that since his return to Poelir, Shronk has been incoherently rambling about some vision he recently had. He will say that no one has been able to make any sense out of it, but that the characters are welcome to accompany him and see what they can make of the old wizard’s ravings.

On the way to Shronk’s bedchamber, the PCs will first be surprised as a **giant black cat** nearly knocks them all down in its haste to reach some unknown destination. Shortly after, when the group enters another corridor, they will find it to be filled with an assortment of floating objects such as chairs, tables, lanterns, vials, mugs, books and the like. After pushing their way past the floating objects, the group will find themselves at the door to Shronk’s chamber where they can hear the loud, hoarse voice of the elderly mage who seems to be babbling incoherently.

**Once inside the chamber, you see a young female human kneeling next to Shronk’s bed trying to calm the aged wizard. She holds a cloth which she dips into a pan of water, rings out, and then dabs against the mage’s forehead.**

**Shronk looks to be about 120 years old, extremely frail, and near death. He stares straight ahead, seemingly oblivious to anyone or anything about him. The young woman constantly tries to hush him with soothing words.**

Attempting to talk to him at all will cause him to ramble off the following:

**“Light! Blinding light! Deaf...deafening sound! Shattered! I saw it, broken. Pain...Pain! Two of them.” (Shronk nods his head several times). “Two...of them...”**

#### **Special Note: Overact Shronk’s speech!**

If the PCs try to get Shronk to clarify any of what he said, he will cry out “Pain!” even louder than before and then collapse from overexertion. They will be unable to get anything further out of him. The young woman will advise them to leave so that Shronk may rest.

To complete the party’s visit to Palmeeron Castle, they may request items for their journey. Typical items found in a local equipment store will be gathered without question. For more exotic items, use your conservative judgment.

As for payment, the PCs have been hired for a handsome reward, which they have agreed to accept upon completion of their mission. As the GM you should decide on the exact amount of the reward based on the norm for your own campaign setting. Before leaving on their journey the PCs will also be given a map of the area surrounding Ruyun (**Map #1**)

and a **Letter** that is signed and sealed by Rufus which explains their mission and plainly indicates their being hired by the City of Poelir.

If the PCs question any of the mages about the giant cat, the floating objects, or the giant mage, they will be told that many attempts to use magic since the disaster have produced some unusual and unpredictable results. They have refrained from using any magic since the castle was partially shifted to another plane. Shifting the castle was accomplished with the aid of Shronk’s experimental notes and the combined magic of all the wizards of Palmeeron.

It is now time for the PCs to begin their quest. When the players have finished selecting spells and gathering equipment, Barmayus will bring them to a large open courtyard where a small herd of **hippogriff** is feeding on the fruit and vegetables of various trees and plants. Barmayus indicates that the creatures are to serve as steeds for the group. The PCs may be somewhat shocked and so Barmayus explains that the **hippogriff** are tame, raised from hatchlings, and bred for just this purpose. He will help any PCs to mount the **hippogriff**, briefly explain how to control the mounts, and will then see them off.

Hippogriff: AC 5; HD 3+3; hp 21; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6/1-6/1-10; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; MV 180 ft., 360 ft. (Fly); SZ L; AL N

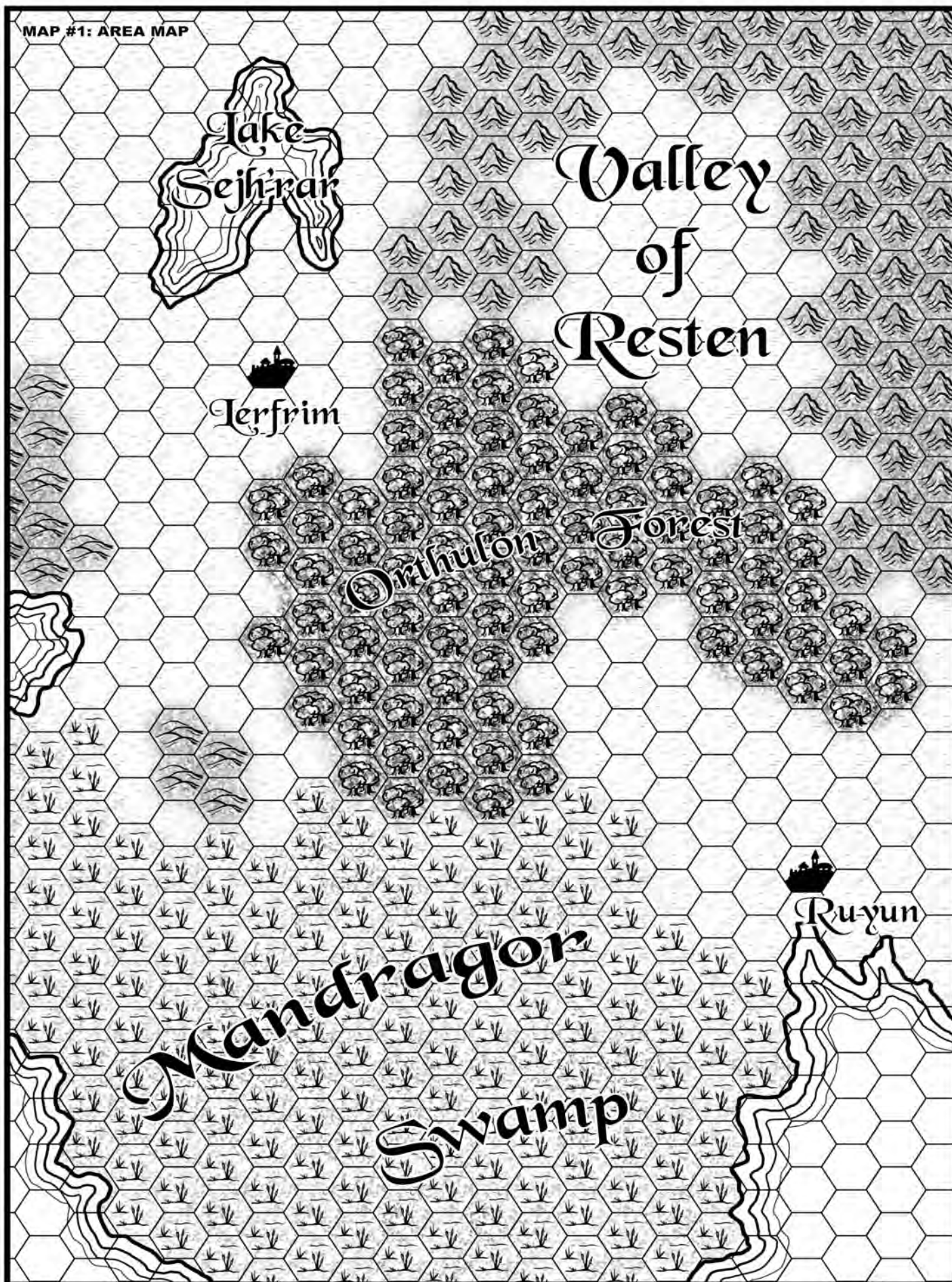
#### **TO RUYUN**

**Upon your flying steeds, you depart Palmeeron as the castle floats high above the small town of Ruyun some thousand feet below. Very easy to spot, the town actually radiates a soft yellow glow which seems to protect the place like a golden dome. The surrounding lands look bleak in comparison.**

**As you descend steadily to the earth, everyone takes notice of a drastic change in the weather. The temperature has plummeted, dark clouds form rapidly overhead, and small,**









*hard chunks of ice begin to pelt you from above. In moments, you are in white-out conditions as heavy hail pounds out of the blackened sky, blasting you and your unprotected steed, forcing you downward and out of control.*

Shortly, the PCs will break through the protective sphere surrounding Ruyun and will be hurled to the ground. Each character will suffer 1d10 hp of bruising damage, but will find that this starts healing almost immediately, disappearing altogether within a few minutes. After the rough landing, the PCs find themselves the center of attention on one of Ruyun's main thoroughfares. After all, it's not everyday that a group of heavily ice-laden adventurers riding hippogriff fall out of the sky.

As the ice and snow begins to melt and the PCs are regaining their senses, one or more local townspeople will arrive to offer some assistance. The PCs will have no problems recovering from their fall, but they will quickly discover that their hippogriff steeds are on the verge of death. While the PCs received only bruises from the fall, the animals suffered serious injuries and will die within minutes of their arrival in Ruyun. Cure spells will either fail according to the **Wild Result Table** or be superceded by the disc's magic (see **Appendix**).

Looking about the town, the PCs can get somewhat an idea of the magnitude of what's been happening in Ruyun by the droves of people swarming through the streets to another part of town. Anyone in town can tell the PCs the reason for the masses. Asking someone will get the PCs a simple explanation regarding the miracles witnessed in the Temple of Krah. Asking any person in town why "he" is interested in going to the temple will result in a variety of answers. Choose an appropriate answer from the choices below.

**A.** The PCs have met a very happy individual who has already been to the temple and was cured of a disease or handicap (e.g. blindness, heart disease, leprosy, paralysis, etc.). If asked, he can provide a general description of the inner temple and of the **disc** (see **General Description below**).

**B.** This person has just arrived and is preparing to go to the temple. He/she is afflicted with some disease or serious handicap. The NPC has only heard rumors about the **disc**, but is a firm believer in its miraculous nature.

**C.** This person wanted to see the **disc**, but was not allowed to enter the temple because he did not have a good reason for being there (he is in perfect health). The temple priests had their guards make sure that he left the temple premises. He is hoping that the initial fascination will die down so that he may be allowed access to the temple.

**D.** This NPC went to see the **disc** out of curiosity, but also wasn't allowed to enter the temple. He was very clever, however, and returned the next day pretending he was deathly ill. The priests believed his story and let him pass into the temple. He is able to give a general description of the inner temple and **disc** (see below).

### General Description of Inner Temple and Disc

NPCs able to give a general description of the inner temple and artifact will tell the players the following:

*Once inside the temple, you wait in a long line which leads down the central aisle and ends at a set of steps. Upon the*

*top step there stands a stone carving of a woman who holds the large metallic disc high above her head. You are allowed to approach within a few feet of the statue and remain there for only a moment before the guards usher you to the exit.*

### GETTING INTO THE TEMPLE

There are three ways the PCs can get into the temple to see the **disc**. They are as follows:

#### [1] Waiting in line

This will take roughly one full day and should be discouraged. However, if the PCs insist on taking this approach, let them do it.

While the PCs are in line, they can speak to others nearby to gain information. There is little, however, to learn from them at this point. They can tell the PCs why they have come to see the **disc** (to be cured, curiosity, etc.), how far they've traveled, how long they've been in town, and so on. They will also be able to tell the PCs that they've heard that not everyone is being allowed to see the **disc** up close. They will say, "In the vestibule of the temple, several priests and guards are there to screen people as they enter. If you don't have a good reason for wanting to see the disc, they'll just send you on your way." Some of the people know that the temple priests are being so careful because there have been attempts to steal the artifact and even one or two attempts by people who wanted to destroy it.

*After several hours of waiting in the slow-moving line, you are at last able to see the Temple of Krah, the center of attention for a hundred thousand people from a dozen different cities. The temple is a few hundred yards ahead on a low-lying plateau surrounded by open country. It is a monolithic stone structure of huge dimensions. You suddenly get a nervous feeling in your stomach. You almost feel as if you are about to pay a personal visit to the greater power, Krah, himself. It won't be long now before you are at the temple entrance.*

#### [2] Sneaking Inside

Sneaking in is not the wisest method to get in and see the **disc**. The PCs should be given no reason to think that they have to sneak in. They have a sealed letter from Rufus Kaylik of Castle Palmeeron that states their mission to Ruyun. The letter should be enough to discourage the players from attempting to sneak in.

However, follow the guidelines outlined below if the players are intent on pussyfooting their way inside.

**A.** All entrances to the Temple of Krah are guarded by at least two temple guards with stats as follows:

Temple Guards (2): AC 4; F5; hp 35; # AT 1; Dmg 1-8+1 (sword); SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; MV 60 ft.; SZ M; AL CG

Being captured by temple guards will make the PCs enemies of the government in Ruyun. They will be imprisoned or, even worse, executed as examples to others (regardless of their sealed orders).

**B.** The only way to get in virtually undetected is by going through the hole in the roof, as the thieves plan to do (see



"The Thieves Can't" for complete details). If the PCs do this, they will immediately be caught up in the thievery fiasco and events should proceed normally from that point on.

### [3] Presenting the Sealed Letter

Explaining to the guards that they have sealed orders from Rufus Kaylik will not immediately gain them entrance to the temple. The guards will direct the PCs to the town Constable, Rorin O'Leary, who resides in city hall near the town square. There they can present their orders to gain admittance.

At City Hall, the PCs can ask to see the constable. A young man at the front desk will say that no one can see Mr. O'Leary without an appointment unless it is a matter of urgency. When the PCs show the man the [letter] with Rufus Kaylik's seal upon it, he will change his attitude and immediately go to fetch the constable.

A few minutes later, the young man will return with a short pot-bellied older man who introduces himself as Rorin O'Leary. He will be anxious to see the letter from Rufus, snatching it up and unsealing it quickly. He will walk slowly around the office while reading the letter with intense interest ("Uh huh...I see... Hmmm...Uh huh," etc.) After reading the letter, Rorin will not seem too pleased about letting the PCs in to examine the [disc], but it will be obvious that he would be overstepping his authority if he were to refuse them. Before revealing that he intends to allow them entrance to the temple, the constable will explain that he can't see how the disc could be the cause of any problems. "Quite frankly," he will say, "It looks like Rufus has sent you on a wild goose chase. However, I'll let you in to get a peek at the disc anyway, as a favor for old Rufus. I'll send a couple of my men to escort you. They'll be closing the temple to the public in a short while so we'd better be quick."

The constable will send for two rough looking men and instruct them to escort the PCs to the temple to see the disc. He will make it clear that he doesn't want them spending too much time there after viewing hours since the temple priests and guards hardly get a moments peace these days.

Once at the temple, the constable's men (use the same stats as the temple guards) will get the PCs into the inner temple to view the artifact. They will be taken immediately up to the statue where they can examine it fairly close for several minutes. At this point it is growing late and the temple guards will begin to close up the temple, allowing no more people in to view the artifact. The PCs will be told that the temple is closing to the public, but that they may be allowed a few extra minutes to view the disc before departing. This will allow the characters time to converse with Ardelix, the town sage who is here studying the disc with his assistant. See "Ardelix, the Town Sage," for complete details on this NPC.

Just as the PCs are preparing to depart the temple, the thieves will infiltrate through the hole in the roof and attack with intentions of stealing the **disc**. See "**The Thieves Can't**" for details on their strategies.

## KEY TO THE TEMPLE OF KRAHL

### 1. The Entrance

The party has made their way to the temple steps leading

to the entrance. There are two sets of double doors on this side of the building. Both sets of doors are wide open to allow entry and exit. The right set of doors is for entry and the left for exiting. As the PCs move closer to the entryway, they will occasionally see an NPC exiting and shouting that his illness or handicap has been cured by the greater powers. He is so overjoyed because of the miracle that he begins to run to everyone he sees to tell them of his good fortune.

### 2. The Vestibule

Within the vestibule are several tables, each with a priestess and two guards behind it. People coming to see the **disc** are escorted by temple guards to one of these tables where they must speak to a priest before entering the temple proper.

Once at the table, the priestess will say to the PCs in a very business-like manner, "State your name and purpose for visiting the temple." If the PCs cannot come up with a good reason for wanting to see the artifact, the priestess will simply thank them for taking the time to visit the town of Ruyun and then the guards will see them promptly out the exit without another word. If the PCs say they have come to worship in the temple, the priestess will tell them that all prayer services are being held in a special location until further notice. She will direct them to the place and then see to it that they are escorted out.

The PCs can get in to see the artifact if they can convincingly pretend an illness, injury, or crippling handicap. However, the priestess may be skeptical and check to see if they are telling the truth if the PCs give her reason to doubt their story.

**NOTE:** Bypass this encounter if the PCs are being escorted by O'Leary's men.

### 3. The Inner Temple

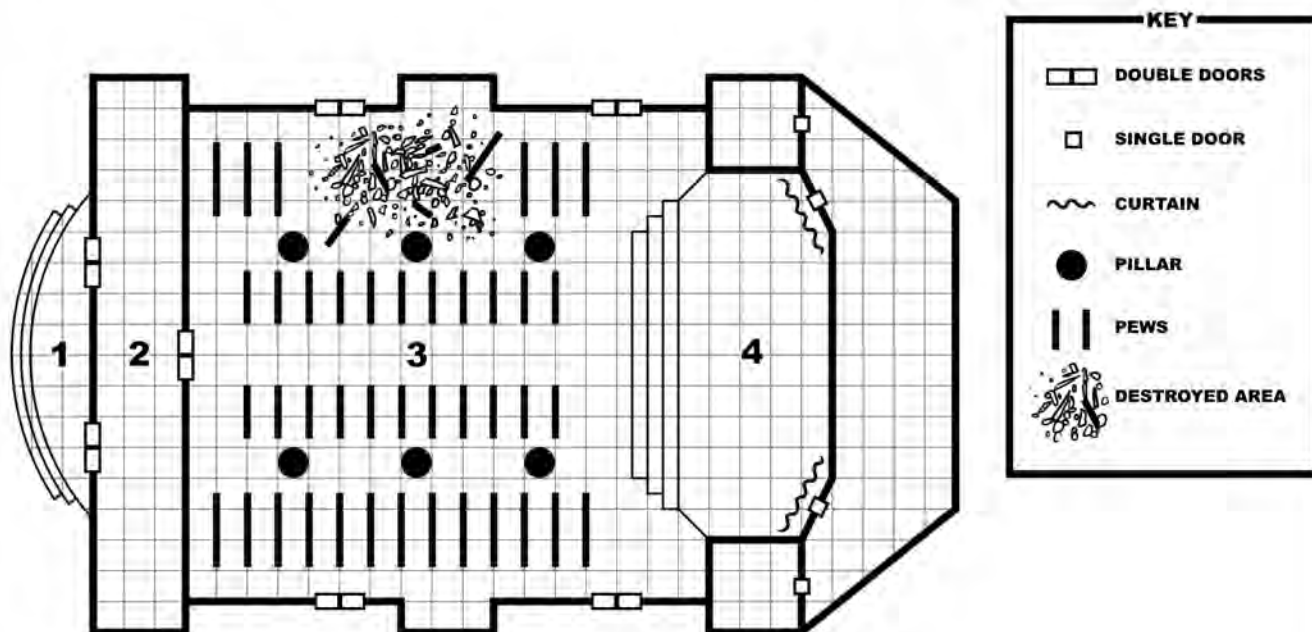
*Once through the vestibule archway, you are within the inner temple standing at the rear of a long line of people which leads down the center aisle between massive stone pillars and rows and rows of pews. At the far end of the temple is a set of stone steps which leads to the sacred area where the artifact is on display. A magnificent carving of a priestess of Krah! holds the disc high above her head. At a distance, all that can be seen is a bright, bluish glow which distorts your view of the miraculous artifact. It is not until you get within a few feet that you can actually get a decent look at the artifact. It is a giant disc which is made of three precious metals in equal portions: platinum, gold, and silver. Etched onto the surface of the disc is what appears to be a map.*

The PCs will be allowed only a brief moment to view the artifact and then a short while to kneel in one of the pews to say a prayer or two. They will then be moved along and out of the temple to make room for others.

During their brief stay at the front of the temple, they will notice an old man who is seated in one of the pews on the left side of the temple. He is obviously not here to be healed, but rather is studying the artifact. See the section on "**Ardelix, the Town Sage**," for complete details on this NPC.

As the PCs are on their way out of the temple, they will notice that an entire section of the temple has been recently damaged. A hole in the roof is being repaired by temple workers and a large section of pews has been destroyed in

MAP #2: TEMPLE OF KRAHL



an area beneath the hole in the roof. These are evidence that the disc crashed through the temple roof when Shronk's experiment went awry.

#### 4. The Artifact

The artifact is held by the unfortunate priestess who first touched it when it landed within the temple. The **geas** power of the disc went to work, but the priestess resisted. The [disc] found her to be unsuitable to the task of restoring the balance and so turned her to stone.

The **disc** is constantly glowing with a bright blue hue which makes it difficult for anyone to focus upon it for long. However, it is easy to see that it is comprised of three metals: platinum, gold, and silver, and that some sort of map is etched on its front. Unless the PCs can get within one or two feet of the disc, they will not realize that the map is actually a map of the entire **REALMS OF ARKONUS**.

Standing next to the disc is the high priestess and to the sides are temple guards who keep a careful watch on all activity around the disc. On the right and left back walls are large velvet curtains which cover doorways that lead to the rear of the temple. At midnight each day, the temple is cleared of everyone except the temple priestesses and guards. Then the artifact is carried through the curtains into the rear temple chambers where it is locked away until the following morning when it is brought back out for display at sunrise. The temple guards are careful not to touch the artifact. They simply carry the entire statue into the secure room.

#### ARDELIX, THE TOWN SAGE

Ardelix can be found in the Temple of Krahll, seated in a pew making sketches of the artifact. A young boy next to him seems to be recording information in a book. Each time a person approaches the disc and is healed, he marks a few things down in the book. The two have obviously been given permission to remain in the temple and conduct their studies.

If approached, the old man will appear uninterested in carrying on a normal conversation with the PCs. He will continue making sketches while he halfheartedly answers any questions the characters may have regarding himself or the artifact. He will never make eye contact with anyone in the group and, if bothered for a lengthy time, will bluntly tell the PCs that he must get on with his work.

Ardelix is the town's local sage. His major area of interest is history, but he has a minor interest in antiquities and magical artifacts. Throughout his many years of study he has catalogued many artifacts, including a number of them that he traveled great distances to see in person. He can tell the PCs that he has never known of anything like the disc ever existing. In fact, he is quite sure that the item was not created by mortal beings. He believes that the disc's presence in the world is not by accident, but by purpose of the greater powers. He is sure that although the artifact is capable of great miracles, its presence foretells great doom for the world. He will nonchalantly say that he is almost certain that the end of the world is imminent. As to where the artifact came from, Ardelix has no idea. He will tell them that he only knows of one person who would have a clue to its origin and purpose: Fafrgard. Ardelix says, however, that last he heard, Fafrgard took off and disappeared into the Mandragor Swamp. He





hasn't heard anything about him in several years. Ardelix tells the characters that anyone who would go into "those" swamps would have to be crazier than a loon.

Ardelix's apprentice, Jaren, is making a complete record of as many miracles as possible that have occurred as a result of the artifact's presence. He has hundreds of listings ranging from simple cures all the way to a restoration of a man who was on the verge of death. People have even brought in the deceased, but so far there have been no resurrections. He has also noted that the artifact's strength increases the closer one gets to it. Some people have been healed by just being near the temple while those with more serious illnesses needed to get within a few yards of the disc before being restored.

### THE THIEVES CAN'T

A group of thieves and assassins, calling themselves the Righteous, have been plotting to steal the artifact from the Temple of Krah and use it for their own purposes. The leader of the lot is Darius, an intelligent young man with deadly skills.

The Righteous arrived in town early in the day and have been scouting out the temple and making plans to obtain the disc. They have learned that the temple is cleared of outsiders around midnight, so they have made preparations to infiltrate around that time. They have disguised themselves as temple guards and priests by donning gray robes.

#### The Plan

A group of the Righteous is at the rear of the temple with horses and provisions necessary for a quick getaway once the disc is liberated. Darius and six others are to climb the walls to the temple roof where they will use ropes to enter through the hole. Once inside, their actions will be as follows:

1. Darius throws a poisoned dagger which strikes the High Priestess. She will die in 6 rounds if not attended to.
2. Two guards and one priestess will rush to aid their fallen high priestess. The remaining guards (6) will rush to attack Darius and his companions. Darius disappears into the shadows.
3. Two rounds of a fierce battle ensue
4. Darius reappears at the statue. He begins dislodging the disc from the grasp of the statue.
5. Darius frees the disc and stuffs it into a **bag of holding**. The disc's magical brilliance is immediately blocked. Darius disappears into the shadows again.
6. The battle progresses.
7. Darius is seen exiting the temple via the rope. The others follow close behind.

The PCs may do as they wish in this battle, but they will be in trouble no matter what course of action they take. The following may occur:

If the PCs try to stop the thieves: They will not succeed. Darius WILL get the artifact and escape through the roof. Rushing to

protect the disc will not be interpreted by the temple guards as such. The guards will believe the PCs to be in league with the thieves and will block their path (even leaving their fallen leader unattended to do so). Thus, Darius will escape with the disc to meet his companions at the rear of the temple. There the PCs can battle Darius and defeat him. However, by this time, the temple guards and priests have alerted the entire town to the activity. Quickly, masses of guards, priests, and townspeople will be after whoever has the artifact with intent to kill them.

The party will not be able to reason with them. They must flee or die!

If the party attempts to steal the artifact themselves: This will have the same results as above. The guards will protect the disc at all costs and as soon as the PCs have it, they will be wanted for dead.

**High Priestess** (11<sup>th</sup> lvl Cleric): AC 7; hp 67; # AT 1; Dmg 2-7+3 (+3 mace); SA Spells; SD Spells; MR Std; MV 60 ft.; SZ M; AL LG; S 12, I 14, W 17, D 12, Co 11, Ch 15

**Spells** (7/6/5/3/2/1): 1<sup>st</sup> – Bless, cure light wounds, detect magic, detect poison, sanctuary, detect evil, protection from evil; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Hold person, augury, speak with animals, silence 15' radius, slow poison, chant; 3<sup>rd</sup> – Prayer, glyph of warding, dispel magic, speak with dead, cure disease; 4<sup>th</sup> – Cure serious wounds, neutralize poison, tongues; 5<sup>th</sup> – Cure critical wounds, atonement; 6<sup>th</sup> – Heal

**Temple Priests** (5<sup>th</sup> lvl Clerics): AC 7; hp 30; # AT 1; Dmg 2-7 (mace); SA Spells; SD Spells; MR Std; MV 60 ft.; SZ M; AL LG; S 13, I 10, W 16, D 8, Co 14, Ch 12.

**Spells** (5/5/1): 1<sup>st</sup> – Cure light wounds, light, command, create water, purify food & drink; 2<sup>nd</sup> – Slow poison, hold person, augury, find traps, detect charm; 3<sup>rd</sup> – Cure disease

### Members of the Righteous

**Darius** (10<sup>th</sup> lvl Thief): AC 6; hp 45; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword); SA Backstab; SD Stealth; MR Std; MV 120 ft.; SZ M; AL LE; S 12, I 14, W 10, D 17, Con 13, Ch 13.

**Others** (5<sup>th</sup> lvl Thieves): AC 7; hp 25; # AT 1; Dmg 1-6 (short sword); SA Backstab; SD Stealth; MR Std; MV 120 ft.; SZ M; AL LE; S 12, I 14, W 10, D 16, Co 13, Ch 8.

### FLEEING RUYUN

The PCs will be easy to track while in possession of the artifact. Even with the disc fully covered, anything within a 60' radius of the disc will glow with a soft, blue hue. Also, any ground the party travels over will become fertile, causing all grass and plants to appear groomed to perfection. Of course, conditions outside of Ruyun are still winter-like so all snow and ice traveled over will be melted, leaving an easy path for anyone to follow.

If the characters stop for any length, the temple guards, priests, and mobs of townspeople will certainly catch up to them. The fate of the group will not be a pretty sight.

When fleeing the town, the group will be forced in the direction of the Mandragor Swamp. Even if the players did

not get information from Ardelix, the adventure will continue as planned. Once the party enters the marsh, they will gain some extra time. Their pursuers will hesitate long enough for them to make a visit to the sage, Fafrgard, without worry of them catching up. However, the stakes are too high in this chase. Even the deadly swamp will only deter the mob for a short time. The chase will be on again.

### THE MANDRAGOR SWAMP

This is an extensive area of very treacherous wetlands, which stretch along the coast of the Tareabar Ocean just below the Orthulon Forest. These marshlands are the home of many ghastly creatures and are infested with millions of biting insects during the summer months.

Winter conditions cease once the party reaches this wretched land. A hot, humid climate is what lies ahead for them. In fact, the climate will be the PCs' worst enemy at this point. The ghastly creatures that live in this marsh will not bother them as long as they have the disc with them. They will see many things in the swamp, but they will not be attacked. Their journey will be messy and uncomfortable and will take several hours.

### FAFRGARD, ANOTHER SAGE

After several hours travel through the Mandragor Swamp, the party will come upon the home of the hermit sage, Fafrgard. His abode is a large hutch-like structure which is built in a large, sturdy tree high above the wetlands below. The place can be reached by climbing wooden steps which are carved into the side of the tree.

Calling out to see if anyone is home will get the party no response. If the characters climb to the home, they will find there is a small wooden platform that they can stand on in front of the door. Once at the door, the PCs can knock to get Fafrgard's attention.

***"And there was a knock upon the door. In walked a group of brave adventurers, weary from lengthy travel. Their quest to save the world had taken them to the home of the hermit sage..." Inside the dimly-lit dwelling, you see an old man rise out of his reading chair and turn to face you with serious eyes. A book and pen he was holding, he sets down upon a small table.***

***"Welcome. I am Fafrgard. I believe you have traveled a great distance to meet me. How may I assist you in your quest?"***

The party may be shocked to learn that the sage knows a great deal about their recent travels. He says that he has a gift that allows him to know the events in the lives of people as if they were characters in a story he was writing. He merely sits in his reading chair, and pens a novel. Each page of the novel is somewhere, to some people, a reality. If asked if he makes the reality or merely records it, Fafrgard is sure that he is only the chronicler and not the author.

If asked what Fafrgard knows that might aid them in completing their journey, he can tell them more about Shronk and the planar experiment. He knows that the disc they carry is merely one of two such discs that make up a magical scale. The scale was designed by the greater powers and serves the purpose of balancing the magic of two worlds which



are in close proximity, but differing planes. He is sure that the other half of the scale, the evil half, must lie on another world. However, Fafrgard does not know which world, or how to get to it. He does know that there is a place that would have the information they need, but that it is on another plane. The place is a library of the greater powers. To get to it, the party must obtain an **amulet of the planes**, which was stolen over 100 years ago by a fairly young **green dragon**. Fafrgard knows that the green dragon is alive and well, living a few days travel to the north of the swamp just inside the Orthulon Forest.

If the party asks if Fafrgard can tell them more about their future, he responds that he cannot. He only knows the events of the party as they actually happen, not before. He will bid them well on their journey.

## LEAVING THE MANDRAGOR SWAMP

*Bidding the kindly sage farewell, you have healed, rested, and re-equipped, then sent on your way with only dim hopes of success. So far the quest has been unpredictable and dangerous, and things seem to be getting worse. A dragon, over one hundred years old, holds the key to success and you all have a feeling that the creature will not willingly give it up. The days are long, but travel has been easy and your company now lies only a days travel from the dragon's cave. It is obvious the beast is still active as no large game is near and knocked down trees are fairly common.*

Regardless of what the players do that night, no creatures will bother them. After two days of long travel, the idea of continuing should be far from the players' mind. The next day the players will confront one of their greatest obstacles. But of course, there are things that the dragon has set up to protect his lair. The main obstacle is a series of **magic mouth** spells set up to delay the party so that the dragon can better prepare. The longer the players delay, the more likely they are to run into trouble. If the players manage to prevent the triggering of the spells, by dispelling magic or traveling under a **silence** spell, it will allow the players the opportunity to get a free attack.

As you move slowly and carefully toward the lair of the dragon, you hear a voice from your left shout,

(1) "Hey, what ya doing? Ya gonna kill the dragon?"

(2) "Be silent! Nothing can kill the dragon!"

(1) "Ya, I guess you're right."

(2) "Of course I'm right you idiot. If I was you, I would put down my magic items on that stump and hope old Chlorox takes it as a gift."

(1) "Heh, heh. Yeah, a gift."

(2) "No, not really a gift, a sacrificial offering."

(1) "Ya, is he a greater power, yet?"

(3) "Shut up you two. What brings the six of you to Orthulon?"

(4) "If you are here to kill the dragon, I can help you. Don't

worry about putting an offering on the stump, but put one of your most precious possessions in the well of sand to the east and a great gift will be yours."

(2) "Shut up, Ariela! Chlorox will slay you for telling them that."

That was the last answer the mouths will give. If the players listened to all of them, they have no hope of surprising Chlorox. And if they leave magic lying around, it will be gone. Items put in the well of sand sink and are lost.

The voices are:

(1) Childish male.

(2) Elderly man

(3) Elderly woman

(4) Young woman.

Of course, all attempts to discover the source of the voices cannot be done without **detect magic** or similar means. The voices are capable of only the written responses, so clever players may realize the hoax. Once they pass the delay, they will enter a large clearing with a large hill in the center. A gaping opening nearly fifty feet wide is set in the middle of it.



## LAIR OF CHLOROX

There are three different ways in which this encounter can be approached, depending on the players' actions in the previous encounter. If the players totally circumvented the magic mouth area, they will be able to enter the cave and catch Chlorox unawares. The dragon will be awake, but surprised to see intruders. He will attempt to talk with the characters until he feels he has an upper hand, then will attack.

If the players were delayed by the mouth spells, but not foolish

enough to throw away a magic item, Chlorox is aware of them and will attack when he thinks he has the advantage.

If the players were foolish enough to give away a magic item (or several), Chlorox will immediately attack the party as they enter.

**The forest parts ahead of you and a large cave about fifty feet wide opens deep into a hill. Just on the edge of the cave there is a wooden sign with writing on it. At this distance, no one can make out what it says.**

Once the players get closer, they will be able to read the sign. It says, "Lair of Chlorox. Are you sure you want to do this? If so, enter at your own risk."

Further in the opening, another sign hangs from the ceiling. This one reads, "Last chance to turn around. Score: Chlorox 51, Adventurers 0."

**Chlorox's lair is a simple cave** - The main entrance tunnel is 50' wide and 100' long. The large common chamber is nearly 250' from end to end and 250' high. The amulet is buried within Chlorox's main treasure bed upon which he lies. Chlorox is a very unusual creature. He is an all-white, bleached green dragon. At age 122, he enjoys the following abilities/attributes:

**Chlorox, Dragon, Green:** AC -5; HD 18; hp 115; # AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/2-20; SA See below; SD See below; MR 40%; MV 90 ft., 300 ft. (Fly), 90 ft. (Swim); SZ L (87' long, tail 76'); AL LE; S 27, I 16, W 17, D 10, Co 21, Ch 16.

**Special Abilities:** +9 combat modifier, save modifier of -1 to opponent's saves.

**Special Attacks:** Breath Weapon: A green dragon has one type of breath weapon, a cone of corrosive (acid) gas. Tail slap for 2d8 damage.

Chlorox will not use any ability or spell of magic user origin. The wild nature of magic has made Chlorox paranoid about using his sorcerer abilities.

Chlorox's favorite tactic is the tail slap. He will always open combat with one if possible. Victims hit by a tail slap must save versus petrification or be stunned for 1d4+1 rounds. His breath weapon is a cone 50' long by 40' wide by 30' high. With it he can capture the entire party in a single blast. He will attempt to focus his bite and breath weapon against a strong fighter type who attacks his front. He will continue to use his tail to his best ability, but when/if the party lowers his hit points to less than fifty, he will attempt to give the adventurers what they want in exchange for his life. He is an extremely lawful creature who will keep his word. If the players manage to kill the dragon, they will find nearly uncountable wealth, **2 potions of cure light wounds**, and the sought after **amulet**. Once they surpass all these obstacles, only one problem remains: how do they use it? Read the following text when the PCs leave the cave:

**As you step out of the cave, you notice the vengeful faces of the citizens of Ruyun. If they have followed you this far then the sage must have met a dismal fate. They seem to be completely set on destroying you. It seems that, once again, the chase is on. This time, the only clear direction is to the north, through the Orthulon Forest. As you start fleeing for your**



**life, you wonder if your weary bodies will elude the tireless hunters. However, despite your weary condition, it seems in time that you are slowly outsmarting and outdistancing the citizens of Ruyun.**

Describe the scenes of pursuit throughout the course of the day. As the sun goes down, however, the pursuers seem to be gaining once again.

**It is growing extremely late and once again the outlook for the quest is fading as the Ruyunans close the gap. Suddenly, however, the entire forest comes to life and the entire population of Ruyun is picked up by trees or pulled to the ground by bushes and vines. After the initial shock settles, a tall (7') human strides out of an oak tree and toward the party. As he comes into the light, he is recognized by all as the Hierophant Druid. "Quickly, all of you, come with me!"**

He leads the group through the forest into a secluded grove with a small pond in the center.

**"I know all of your adventures so far, and I know what lies in your way. The amulet you possess can transport all of you to a plane where you can make some progress on restoring this balance problem. Watch the pool and learn."**

**As you watch the waters, they slowly blur into a picture of a man holding the same amulet you now hold. He performs a simple ritual and the medallion activates, transporting him to a building with 100' tall silver pillars. He no longer holds the amulet; it has obviously been left behind. The waters return to normal and the Hierophant and all of the Ruyunans have vanished. All that is left is for you to activate the medallion.**

**Following the ritual from the vision, ancient magic kicks into action. You know that wizardry is failing, but you have no**



*choice. As the item activates, you all experience a state of euphoria followed by a gut-wrenching feeling. A world of colors race before your eyes and you feel your consciousness slowly ebb from you...*

*As you return to consciousness, you find yourselves sitting on the porch of a magnificent building with silver pillars towering at least 100 feet above you. As you gather your senses and equipment, the enormous silver and gold doors swing open revealing rows upon rows of books. An inscription above the door reads, "In all things there is knowledge, in all that happens wisdom may be gained."*

## THE DIVINE LIBRARY

*As you step inside, you get a better feel for the enormous size of this structure. A large vaulted ceiling, at least 100 feet above you, seems to be supported by thousands of bookshelves. A door is visible directly in front of your current vantage point. No people are visible and ahead of you, but a faint scratching sound can be heard. You now realize that the scratching is audible due to the fact that the only other sounds in the structure are caused by you.*

Anytime the players talk in normal voices, a **magic mouth** will appear and "Shhh!" the players. Each of the four areas of the library is a different section where the PCs may be amused, entertained, or gain valuable information as they journey to the central area. The sections are as follows:

- (1) Science Fiction
- (2) Romance
- (3) History
- (4) Future

All sections have in common a large table with a quill floating above an open book. Whether or not the quill is writing depends on the individual section.

### Section 1: Science Fiction

*As you enter this section, millions of books line the walls and you see a large oak table set in a clearing. Above it floats a gray quill, rapidly writing into an open book. As you stare in wonder, three ghostly visions suddenly fade into solid beings. Each of them wears highly unusual clothing. Two are wearing blue while the third is wearing gold. One of the blue-shirted men is not human. He has eleven ears despite a large build. Most likely he is half-elfen. The man in gold is a well-built human and appears to be the group leader. The final man is average in most respects except for his strong desire to debate with the half-elf. They seem to be discussing something amongst themselves, but you are unable to make out any of the speech as they make no noise. Then, as suddenly as they appeared, they vanish in a shimmering of golden light. The quill stops moving and all is silent. A single door is in the northwest corner of the room.*

If the players check the book on the table, a dialogue is contained within its pages. It identifies the three characters as Speck, Kork, and Bones, Through the course of looking at it, it seems that Speck was fascinated by strange vibrations, Kork was re-telling old war stories about "Klinjons," while Bones kept saying, "He's dead, Jim," or "Oh, go stick your Bulcan logic."

Other books on the shelves have bizarre titles such as "Fantastic Voyage," "Space Trek XV," "Revenge of the Mutants," "Dr. What's it," and millions more. No other visions will appear to the PCs in this area and nothing else will happen except for magic mouths "Shhh!"ing the party.

### Section 2: Romance

For this encounter, target the most charismatic male character in the party. If the group consists of all females, pick the most charismatic female character. If it is a male character, the NPC in the following encounter will be female, else it will be male. Substitute the text where appropriate depending upon the situation.

*You see millions of books surrounding a large oak table, above which floats a large quill. As you enter, it begins to move at amazing speeds. As it writes, a very beautiful girl/handsome boy fades into existence to the left of the party. She/he seems very sad and she/he mumbles incoherently to herself/himself. Suddenly, she/he turns and speaks, "<PC Name>, <PC Name>, wherefore art thou, <PC Name>?" She/he turns and looks directly at the party. A door is in the northeast corner.*

She/he will not move or act again until the targeted PC comes forward and talks with her/him. Once this happens, she/he will continue the scene for as long as the PC participates, reciting words of eternal love. Each time either speaks, the quill moves, taking its dictation. If the girl/boy is physically touched by anyone, the scene ends as she/he fades away. As the scene continues on, two (or more) ends are possible. Either she/he will attempt to run away with the PC through the bookcase (which the PC cannot do) or convince him/her to slay himself/herself with her/him. The PC will be unable to kill himself/herself with the visionary dagger, but it will put him/her into a deep sleep until the vision ends moments later. The scene ends once the girl/boy disappears, or the players open the door. The section will not replay the vision again. The magic mouths will once again reactivate, "Shhh!"ing the party when needed.


### Section 3: History

As the players pass through the doors past the vision of the girl/boy, they will face very similar scenery.


*To your right, as you pass through the doors, the familiar sight of nearly endless shelves and the large oaken table are found in this area as well. Unlike the other areas, this one is covered with a thin layer of dust, and the quill above the table does not move. A door is on the north wall a mere four-hundred feet away.*

This is the History section and, for the time being, nothing is being recorded. With the planar balance off-tilt, the librarians have elected to shut this area down. If the players take the time to examine the book on the table, taking them an hour or two, they will eventually learn the tale of the well-meaning wizard, Shronk, and his disruption of the Magic Balance (as explained in the GM's Background for the first round). The writing immediately ends there, while several blank pages follow it. If the players spend more time in this section, they can find history texts of various planes including their own, retelling their greatest adventures in explicit detail. The quill will never move in this section and not even the magic mouth spells are active. Nothing else of value to the quest is here;

MAP #3: THE DIVINE LIBRARY

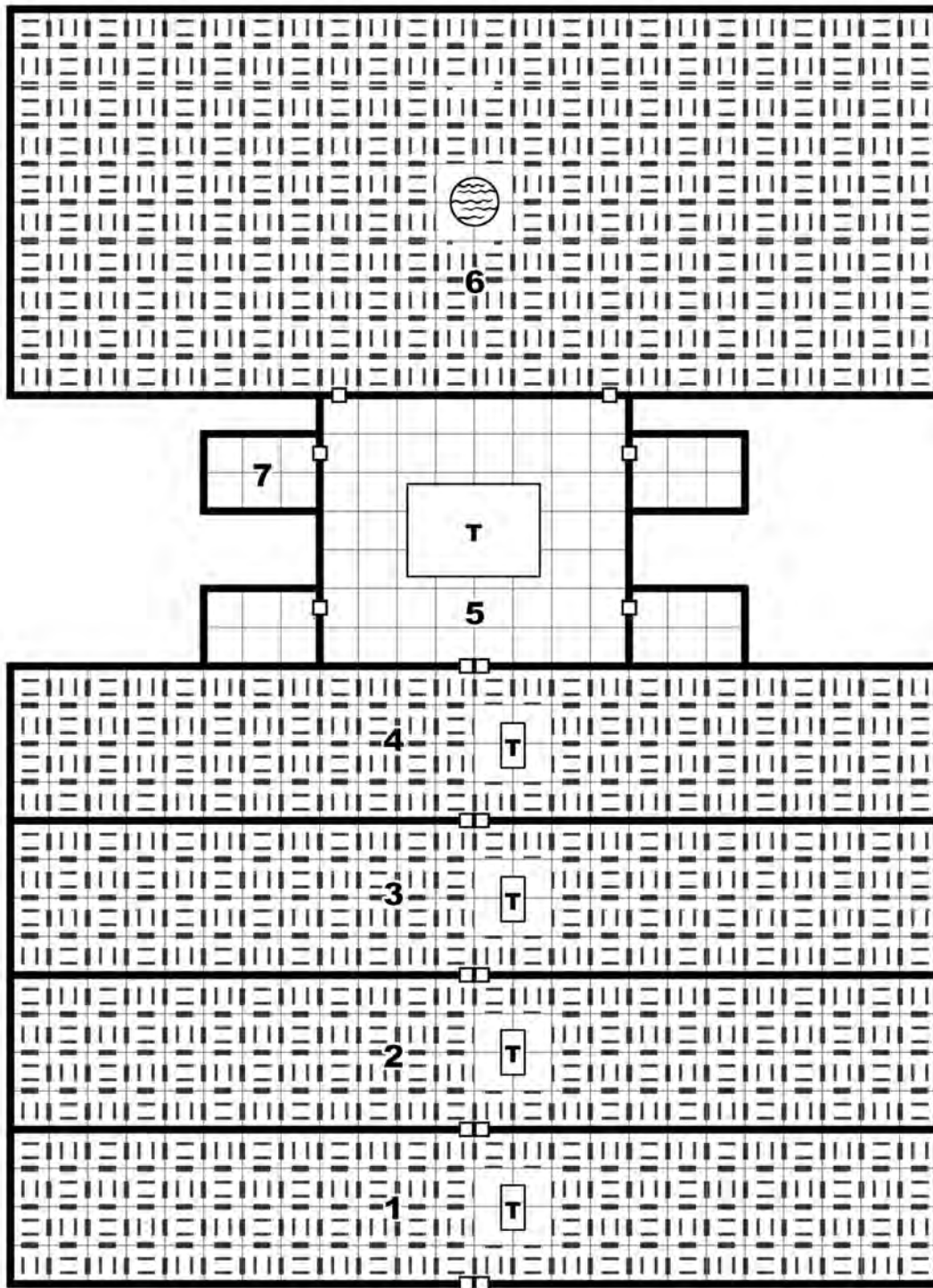
 100 FEET

KEY

 DOOR

 TABLE

 WATER BASIN





though it is feasible players will try to continue their search. If this happens, roll dice, tell them they find nothing, and remind them of the door.

#### Section 4: The Future

***As with all the previous sections of this strange building, opening the door reveals a massive chamber identical to the one you just left. The only difference is the quill. It was writing as you opened the door, but as you stepped in, it stopped. The pages of the book, however, have begun to flutter wildly backward. Suddenly, the book opens, and the quill begins to write once more.***

If the players look at the current page of the book, they will see it as a log of their travels up to this point. The quill is writing everything the players say and do. If the players try to look forward in this book, it will vanish. Upon the massive shelves, millions of books with titles unlike anything they have ever seen before are everywhere.

Once the players have learned and amused themselves here, they may move north into the librarian's chamber.

#### Section 5: The Librarian

***As you open the door expecting to see more books and another oaken table, you are amazed to see a chamber only eight-hundred feet long from east to west and seven-hundred feet from north to south. There are seven doors: two on each wall except for the one you entered. A massive desk about one-hundred feet square sits in the center of the room and a twelve-foot tall angelic figure is busy sorting books behind it. To add to all this, there are a few other humans milling about, and the noise level here is allowing you to speak normally.***

None of the humans will be of any help to the PCs yet, but the Librarian can prove to be of great assistance, finally shedding light on the situation. When the players reach the desk, read the following:

***You see a tall, twelve-foot, human-looking angel with golden hair and flowing white robes. Hangings from his neck on a platinum chain are a thick pair of crystal lenses. He slips these on and asks in a kind tone, "May I help you?"***

His name is Beauragard, the Assistant Librarian, and what he lacks in knowledge he makes up in kindness. He has excellent knowledge of where the players are: "You are in a library," and nothing more. If they ask him anything about the balance, he will simply say, "You better check with Reference," as he points to the two doors in the north wall. If the players ask him how to leave, his response will be, "The way you came in?" Those are the typical Beauragard answers. He is really new here and unfortunately knows only slightly more than the players. He does know that the other doors lead to other wings including "Music," "Childrens," "Art," and "Religion/Spellcraft."

#### Section 6: Reference

***As you open the doors into this chamber, the awesome sight is beyond all the other sections of the library. Nearly one-thousand feet from north to south and at least that long from east to west. Books are everywhere from floor to two-hundred foot high ceiling as well as piles upon piles upon the***

***floor. Dominating the center of this chamber is a large, one-hundred foot diameter, basin of water that is set three feet off the floor. You see no signs of anyone or anything else in this entire chamber and, once again, it is silent.***

From here on out, it is up to the PCs. They really have only two options: Methodically plod through all the books (taking them about two years) or use the "Card Catalog" pool. Its operation is very simple, but the Librarian is, as always, clueless. All one has to do is look into the waters and speak the name of the subject that they are interested in. A simple code will appear, telling them where the book is. The Magic Balance code is "114N, 7D, 3R," which means 114th rank on the north wall, 7th shelf down, 3rd book on the right. Yes, this does put the book over 150' up, but a rogue can climb it easily (no roll). Other codes are similar in nature and will lead players to texts on the subjects they are asked about. Once they solve the coding scheme, the players will possess a book entitled, "The Magic Balance." Give the players the **Player's Handout: The Magic Balance** after reading it out loud. Now, the only problem ahead of the PCs is to get off this plane and find the second half of the Scale. The first step lies just outside the Reference Room. If players continue to search the current room, read them the following:

***Outside in the main areas, you hear yelling and the familiar voice of Beauragard trying to calm another voice you don't recognize.***

Therin, the Sorcerer

***As you step forth from the Reference Section, you see poor Beauragard defending himself from a verbal assault by an old human. He seems to be hollering about the lack of an exit. As you get a better look at him, you remember him from the Hierophant's vision. The only thing wrong is that he has aged nearly forty years.***

It is up to the players to get the old man away from the librarian and there are limitless ways of doing this due to the fact he yells at the angel nearly every day for forty years and knows he will get nowhere. Once taken aside, he will calm considerably, but will still be on edge. He will identify himself as Therin the Sorcerer. He was exiled here to find a counterspell to cure his afflicted king. Unfortunately, a very large being has decided to take up residence in the Spellcraft Section and the fool librarian won't do anything about it. He can transport the players anywhere they want to go, if they will deal with the menace in Spellcraft. He is personally unable to do so because his magic spells may damage the priceless knowledge to the books therein.

Therin the Sorcerer

Level 20 Magic-User; hp 58; AC -6

May cast 9<sup>th</sup> lvl or lower spells as needed, but not wastefully!

#### Section 7: Peter Rabbit

***Following Therin's directions, you move across the library to the Spellcraft section. Opening the door, you notice two things: First, a fifty-five foot tall white rabbit is lumbering your way and, secondly, Therin has vanished!***

Peter Rabbit: AC 3; HD 12; hp 100; # AT 2; Dmg 2-24/2-24; SA Nil; SD Nil; MR Std; MV 90 ft.; SZ L (50' tall); AL N

Once the rabbit is dealt with, Therin will reappear and apologize, stating that the beast reminded him of an old familiar he once had. Thanking the players for their help, he begins the spell to transport them to the World of Alaris.

*Whirling colors shift all around the room and a portal on the far wall opens to reveal nothing but darkness. As you step forward, you feel your bodies pull in every direction. Pain shoots through you like ice in your veins and consciousness slips away.*

*When you awaken, you find yourselves in the center of a small village at the edge of a large forest. Your first impression is that something is dreadfully wrong. Looking about, you realize the horrible reality. Everything in the village is dead or contaminated. The bodies of hundreds of former villagers lay scattered about in awkward resting places.*

*Checking about, you discover that all water in wells and ponds is now black and undrinkable, and food is rotted and mold covered. A path leads out of town and into the forest to the north.*

The players will gain nothing if they continue to search through the village. This place is merely evidence that the evil half of the magic balance is nearby. However, the **evil disc** is NOT in this village. The players must follow the black road deep into the Forest of Ruin to locate the object of their quest.

## THE FOREST OF RUIN

*You have come to a barren stretch of land just before an unnatural, narrow black path leading directly into the heart of the forest. The ground before the road is considerably worn down and no vegetation of any sort grows there. It is also evident that all other forms of life on the path, within a few feet of the trail, have withered, blackened and died very recently. The road itself is of an unnatural color, blackened as if a strange evil burrowed beneath the dirt and spread its sickening presence to the area surrounding it. A barely visible grayish gas slowly undulates a few inches above the sooty ground. No sound, but the steady, nearly silent whisper of the wind penetrates beyond the parting of the oakwood branches. The road stretches seemingly to an infinite distance. It seems a thousands eyes are upon you, but nothing can be seen.*

As the players travel along the dark path, they will catch fleeting glimpses of black creatures within the woods, but will not be able to make out their forms. As long as the PCs remain on the path, the beasts will not attack them. However, straying from the path is deadly. Several of the evil creatures will viciously attack anyone that enters the woods. The creatures are massive hairy, black beasts with powerful jaws and incredibly sharp claws which they rake their opponents with quite effectively. They are creations of the evil disc and serve to guard it. Their stats are:

**Horrible Uglies:** AC 0; HD 10; hp 60; # AT 3; Dmg 1-12/1-12/2-24; MV 120 ft.; SZ L; AL CE

### The Poison Fruit

*You have been traveling the dark road for nearly three days without rest. Though you know you need rest, you are afraid*

*to stop and spend the night on the black and evil path. However, the road seems to have no end. It is very likely that there is nothing at the end of the path, that it continues onward to the edge of eternity and once on that path there is no turning back. You have noticed, though, that some berry plants are beginning to grow in groups near the road's edge. Their bright blue color and lively appearance beckons you to taste them.*

There is nothing here that can make the PCs eat the berry plants. Doing so would be unwise. Anyone eating of the berry plants must make a saving throw versus poison at -4 or die instantly (never to be raised again by any means).

When characters continue down the road, they will travel for another three days before coming to the end of the road. Complete exhaustion will cause all characters to collapse at area 2 and fall asleep for 1-3 days unless three ability checks are successful (strength check at -2, constitution check at -4, and intelligence check at -4).

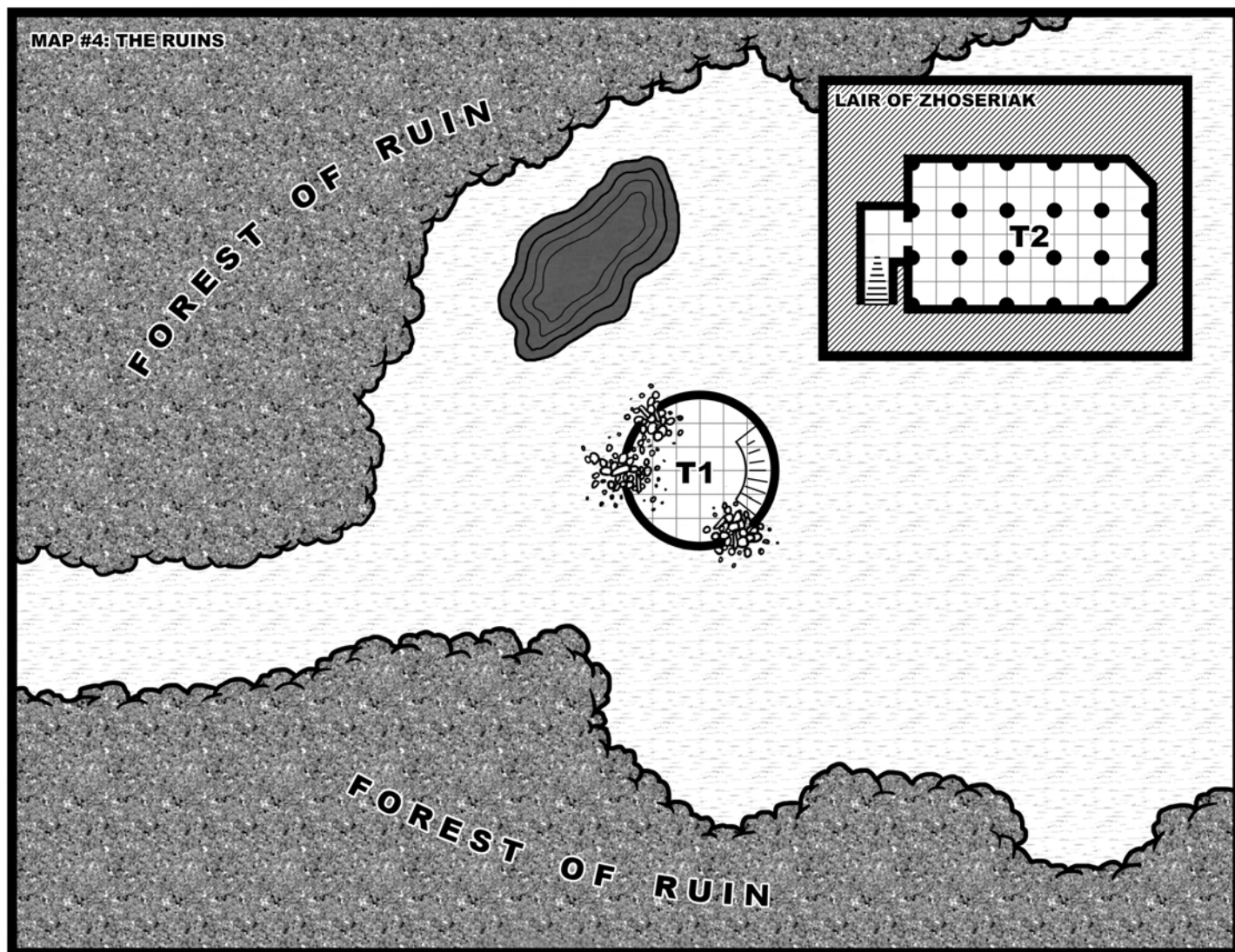
### The Ruins

*Miraculously, the dark road finally ends after six days of constant travel. Bones worn raw, muscles aching beyond imagine, you stare stupefied at the crumbled remains of a once beautiful tower. The singular structure, once probably reaching the heights of the giant oakwoods themselves, is now reduced to a small, caved-in complex with its remains scattered about the forest floor as if by some tremendous explosion from the inside. A small, irregular opening, choked with rubble, seems to be the only point of entrance. To the left of the tower remains, there is an oblong lake of brackish liquid. Its waters seem as calm and alive as the forest itself.*

The entrance to the tower is completely unstable and can, 20% chance, collapse when any one character enters through it. Damage sustained from collapse will be 2-20 points







for anyone within a 10' radius of the falling stones. Once a collapse occurs, the entry will not collapse again. However, it will take from 2 - 8 turns for characters to clear away the rubble to gain entry to the tower.

#### The Black Lake

Peering into the black lake will reveal that it is so dark that absolutely no reflection can be seen in the water. Drinking the water is deadly. Those daring to even sip its poisonous depths will die (no save) and can never be returned from the dead.

### INTO THE RUINS

#### T1. Inside the Tower

*The inside of the tower is roughly thirty feet in diameter. The roof is collapsed in several areas, but was once twenty feet in height. A set of stone steps leads downward, past ruined stone, and into darkness. No sound can be heard below.*

Nothing dangerous lies in this entrance hall. There will be no chance for collapse at this point.

#### T2. To the Lair of Zhoseriak

*The spiral staircase winds down into a large, pillared hall approximately one-hundred feet long by eighty feet wide. From somewhere in the room, you sense an evil so vile that you are having great difficulty forcing yourselves to continue.*

The evil that is felt is that of the evil disc, which is in the possession of a Lich, Zhoseriak. Just as the PCs can sense the evil disc, Zhoseriak is able to detect the presence of the good disc and knows that the party is in his chamber. He is preparing to surprise the group, attacking with everything he has to destroy them. Zhoseriak's stats are as follows:

**Zhoseriak, Lich:** AC 0; HD 11+ (18<sup>th</sup> lvl Magic-User); hp 75; # AT 1; Dmg 1-10; SA See below; SD +1 of better weapon to hit; MR Std; MV 60 ft.; SZ M; AL N(E)

**Spells** (5/5/5/5/5/3/3/2/1): 1<sup>st</sup> – read magic, burning hands, shocking grasp, magic missile, sleep; 2<sup>nd</sup> – detect invisibility, mirror image, web, invisibility; ray of enfeeblement; 3<sup>rd</sup> – blink, dispel magic, fireball (x2), fly; 4<sup>th</sup> – dimension door, ice storm, polymorph other, fire trap; 5<sup>th</sup> – feeblemind, teleport, wall of stone, passwall, cloudkill; 6<sup>th</sup> – chain lightning, death spell, stone to flesh; 7<sup>th</sup> – limited wish, monster summoning v, duo-dimension; 8<sup>th</sup> – mass charm, symbol; 9<sup>th</sup> – gate

**Special Attacks:** Chilling touch that causes 1d0 points of

damage and paralyzes opponents who fail to save versus paralyzation. The sight of Zhoseriak causes creatures with less than 5 HD to flee in panic from fear.

*All will be well in Arkonus again, thanks to you.*

This ends the Magic Balance.

**[The Evil Disc]:** Zhoseriak uses the evil disc as a shield. Anything directed at Zhoseriak will only have a 20% chance of getting past this shield. Any weapon striking the disc will be disintegrated. Spells hitting the shield will dissipate, having no effect.

### Tactics

Due to the fact that the lich can sense the parties approach, he will have successfully cast the following spells.

- 1) **Symbol of pain** on the entrance to his chambers.
- 2) **Monster summoning V** resulting in the presence of a **minotaur** and **cockatrice**.
- 3) **Gate** resulting in the presence of a **Babau**.
- 4) **Shocking grasp** allowing the lich to deliver a touch dealing 5d6 of damage.

Other spells that failed in the attempt to cast them were the following:

- 1) Invisibility
- 2) Mirror Image
- 3) Limited Wish

**Minotaur:** AC 6; HD 6+3; hp 39; # AT 2; Dmg 2-8 or 1-4; SA Nil; SD Surprised only on a 1; MR Std; MV 120 ft.; SZ L; AL CE

**Cockatrice:** AC 6; HD 5; hp 32; # AT 1; Dmg 1-3; SA Touch turns to stone; SD Nil; MR Std; MV 60 ft., 180 ft. (Fly); SZ S; AL N

**Demon, Babau:** AC -3; HD 7+14; hp 43; # AT 3; Dmg 2-5/2-5/2-8; SA Cause darkness, fear by touch, heat metal, gate another Babau (25%); SD Slashing and piercing weapons do ½ dmg; MR 50%; MV 150 ft.; SZ M (7'); AL CE

To defeat Zhoseriak and restore the Magic Balance, both pieces of the **disc** must come into contact with each other. Once done, read the following text out loud.

### BALANCE RESTORED

*As the good disc comes into contact with the evil disc, there is a blinding flash of light. Everything suddenly begins to spin wildly about, and you feel as if you are being hurled through space and time with no control over your speed or direction of travel. Within moments, a nausea sweeps over you and you feel as if you have landed upon the ground with great force of impact. It seems an eternity of darkness, but finally you are able to open your eyes and see where you have landed.*

*You know the room is familiar, but it takes a few moments before you actually realize what has happened. You and your companions are in the King's Audience Chamber of Castle Palmeeron, the place where you began your quest. Rufus Kalik, Barmayus, and the others tend to you immediately. Wounds from your recent battle with the lich seem insignificant next to the smiles of the wizards around you. Without even asking, you know that the contacting of the two discs together has somehow restored the Magic Balance of the greater powers.*



## APPENDIX

### The Disc

The disc is 12 inches in diameter and is made of 3 metals perfectly fused together. The metals are gold, silver, and platinum. The disc radiates good magic of unbelievable power if detected for. Upon touching the disc, the individual who did so receives the following:

- (1) Charisma attribute of 18
- (2) Cast **command** 3 times/day at -8 saving throw
- (3) **Protection from evil** 50' radius (as the spell)
- (4) **Dispel evil** 1/day (as the spell)
- (5) **Geas**. If the disc is handled by someone for 3 or more rounds, a geas will affect them unless they choose to resist. The geas forces the person to do everything in his power to see that the Good Disc is restored to its proper plane. Attempting to resist the geas and the character doing so must make a save versus spell at -4 or be turned to stone.

In addition to those powers/abilities mentioned above, the disc radiates the following spheres of healing which apply to humanoid, animal, and plant life:

- (1) **Heal** spell in 10' radius\*
- (2) **Cure Major diseases/handicaps** 10' radius\*
- (3) **Cure Critical wounds** in 60' radius\*
- (4) **Cure Serious Wounds** in 120' radius\*
- (5) **Cure Light Wounds** in 200' radius\*
- (6) **Cure Minor Bruises/Afflictions** in 1 mile radius\*
- (7) Provide perfect weather within a 3 mile radius\*\*
- (8) Provide fertility within a 10 mile radius\*\*

\* - The disc must be stationary for a minimum of 10 rounds and the target of the healing must not be engaged in any strenuous activity such as working, running, fighting, etc.

\*\* - These affects do not occur immediately. The disc must remain in the same place for a minimum of 1 hour before the affect gradually begins to manifest.

### Magic Item Mishap

When using magic items such as potions, wands, and staffs, the result shall be unpredictable. Use the following tables to determine what occurs when any of these items are used. Note that permanent magic items such as swords, boots, cloaks, etc. shall function normally.

#### Potions

d100	Result
01 - 50	Fails
51 - 65	Has opposite effect
66 - 75	Works at ½ effectiveness
76 - 90	Has the effect of another randomly rolled potion
91 - 00	Works normally

#### Wands and Staffs

d100	Result
01 - 25	Fails; Item loses charge
26 - 35	Fails; Item retains charge
36 - 50	Crazy Reaction (see table below)
51 - 60	An explosive reaction affects wielder for 2d6 damage

61 - 89	Works at ½ effectiveness
90 - 00	Works normally

### Crazy Reaction

d100	Result
01 - 10	Shoots a stream of water
11 - 25	Bubbles spew out of the wand/staff
26 - 35	Butterflies spew out of the wand/staff
36 - 45	A swarm of gnats spew out of the wand/staff causing a great nuisance
46 - 55	A cloud of smoke covers a 60' radius making it difficult to see
56 - 65	Fireworks shoot out of the wand/staff in a beautiful pyrotechnic display
66 - 75	The wand/staff rips from the wielder's hand and is thrown 20' in a random direction
76 - 85	A burst of dust explodes from the wand and causes the wielder to choke for 1d4 rounds
86 - 95	Oil spews forth from the wand/staff. Surfaces become slippery. Dexterity check to avoid falling during combat.
96 - 00	A gust of wind (as the spell) is directed at opponents

### Casting spells

Spells may be cast during the course of the adventure, by PCs or monsters. However, the results are entirely unpredictable. Use the Wild Result Table provided below in order to determine the effects of such castings.

### Wild Result Table

d100	Result
01-10	Fails
11-20	Reverse Effect*
21-30	Fails
31-40	Affects caster instead of target
41-50	Fails
51-60	Succeeds, but Effectiveness is Halved
61-70	Fails
71-80	Succeeds as Expected
81-90	Fails
91-00	Succeeds, but Effectiveness is Doubled

\*If there is no reverse, then the spell simply fails.

## PLAYER'S HANDOUT: THE MAGIC BALANCE

...the Magic Balance is an artifact of great power consisting of two main parts, the discs. It was designed to keep two alternate planes of existence from contacting on another. The [scale] was put into a small pocket dimension between the two worlds. It should maintain safety for all eternity.

The only fault lies in the small chance that a native of either plane not only discovers the pocket, but attempts to journey to it. If this happens, the mortal presence will shift the balance, sending the two discs into the two worlds and catapulting the traveler back to his home plane. If the balance is broken, it must be restored as soon as possible.

The first disc has its primal energy in all that is Good. Made of platinum, silver, and gold, its individual powers are unknown, but if separation occurs, the disc will most likely return to the Realms of Arkonus. While it may have some beneficial effects, its presence will eventually destroy the entire plane.

The second disc has its primal energy in Evil. Made of ruby, emerald, and sapphire, its properties will corrupt and destroy everything it comes into contact with. If disc separation occurs, it will return to its plane of origin, in the World of Alaris. It must be regained, but only with the protection of the first disc can this be accomplished.



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# REALMS OF ARKONUS

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## The Magic Balance

by Thomas J. Scott & J. Allan Fawcett

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It has often been said that magic is the life-blood of Arkonus. It is a source of great power; wisdom, healing, defense, and offense. Without it, many fear that life would hardly resemble what you know it to be. Once only a theory, now that theory is being put to the test. Seven days ago, suddenly and without warning, magic began to fail. Its use has become unpredictable and unstable.

The elder mage of Palmeeron fears that the planar experiments of an eccentric mage has upset a critical balance in the Realms of Arkonus. Can you find the cause and restore the balance?

The Magic Balance was an official tournament module used at Michicon '92. This version has been adapted to the Realms of Arkonus fantasy campaign setting and contains revisions that were not part of the original module.



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