

Paper & Pen RPGs

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Companion Level Modules

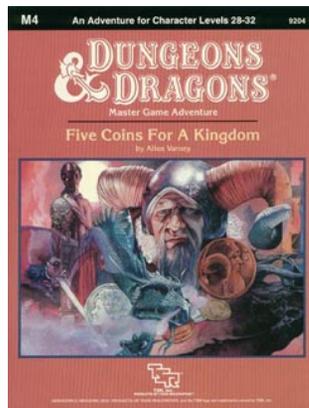
CM1 - Test Of The Warlords
CM2 - Death's Ride
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CM6 - Where Chaos Reigns
CM7 - The Tree Of Life
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Master Level Modules

M1 - Into The Maelstrom
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M3 - Twilight Calling
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Immortal Level Modules

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IM2 - The Wrath Of Olympus
IM3 - The Best Of Intentions



M4 - Five Coins For A Kingdom

System: Dungeons & Dragons

Code: #9204

Type: Adventure

Levels: 26-36

Author: Allen Varney

Year: 1987

Publisher: TSR

Format: 40-page book w/tri-fold cover



M4 Five Coins For A Kingdom - General Review

Of the 5 master level modules, this module by far is the least Norworld centric module. In fact, this module could be set pretty much anywhere and still work. The basic premise is that a group of wizard kings from another solar system have been imprisoned and need the characters to not only help them escape, but also to save their capital city from being hurled into their sun, and also to lead their armies to victory over an invading army. And then the characters have to go back and save another city from their own sun. Pretty epic - and that is what you want from a masters level module!

M3 Introduction

In the 1 page introduction section we are introduced to the major players in this adventure. Namely Durhon the evil ruler of Volde who has somehow managed to marshal amazing powers and imprison the 5 powerful ruling wizards of Trann and send these imprisoned wizards along with their capital city of Solius hurling into the Eloysian sun! Eloysia is the overall star system, and we'll get to more into that description below. In a last ditch desperation effort, the wizards have sent 5 enchanted coins from their realm into the prime plane. The hope is that powerful characters will find these coins and save the wizards from imprisonment and the city from burning in the sun and the kingdom from invasion.

M3 Chapter 1 - A City Vanishes

This chapter deals with drawing the characters into the adventure. The city the characters are currently in begins vanishing and the characters have to deal with that - unfortunately nothing they do will help their city. The characters are given the first of 5 coins, and will have to earn the other 4. This chapter goes relatively quickly and leads us to chapter 2 - the real beginning of the adventure.

M3 Chapter 2 - Hard Work For Small Pay

With the first coin in hand, the characters will have to obtain the other 4 coins. The coins have all be deposited nearby by the wizards, and the first coin will lead the characters to the other coins. The wizards have purposefully placed the coins in areas that will be challenging for the characters. The wizards want to make sure these characters are up to the challenge and have placed these coins to allow the characters to demonstrate their abilities and prove that they are indeed the right people for the job. The foes that are faced are also each serve as a clue as to how the characters will help in freeing the wizards once they reach the capital city where the wizards are imprisoned. Of course the DM never mentions this little fact - that is up to the players to figure out and use to their advantage. Once all 5 coins are obtained, a gate to the wizards realm is opened, and we continue on!

M3 Chapter 3 - Arrival In Eloysia

This chapter starts off with a description of the realm of Eloysia. The realm is made up of a sun surrounded by all kinds of planetoids, called islands in the module. Some of these islands are independent while others are part of larger nations or kingdoms. Not too much space is used to describe these other various potential settings other than to say that "most of the inhabitants live in a bewildering diversity of nations and cultures." Also of note is

that gravity works differently here with the sun actually giving an outward push while the outer shell of the star system gives an inward push. Larger islands are located further away from the sun.

The goal of the characters in this chapter is to free up the Wizards. The characters actually gate to the capital city of Solius. However, most of the city has vanished. Basically, the site of the city has been ripped from the ground and has been hurled into the sun. The characters must save the city before it is consumed by the heat of the star. The only remaining buildings are the strongholds of the various wizards. The characters must enter each of these buildings in order to obtain a piece to the puzzle of freeing the wizards. Once the clues have been assembled, the characters will free the wizards. Once the wizards are free, their combined power, along with help from any spell-casting PCs, will save the city just in the nick of time.

M3 Chapter 4 - Against Durhan

With the capital city of Solius no longer speeding to certain doom into the sun, the wizards ask the characters to help with saving their kingdom of Trann from the invading armies of Volde being led by the King Durhan, king of Volde. So while the wizards stay behind to guide their city back to its proper place, they send the characters ahead on a giant space traveling creature. The hope is for the characters to travel back to Trann, marshal the armies of Trann, defeat the invading armies of Durhan, and then defeat Durhan himself. And the remainder of this chapter is dedicated to those ends. This includes traveling through the solar system, dealing with a group of annoying Archons to gain control of the Trannian armies, crossing giant grappling hook bridges to engage the invading armies, and finally defeating Durhan who has greatly enhance abilities via the use of an artifact which greatly magnifies his magical powers. The chapter ends with the characters ultimate defeating all the baddies and saving the day.

M3 Chapter 5 - Into The Sun

The final chapter involves the PCs returning back to the prime plane and their own realms, only to discover that their city has not been saved, and that they will have to journey into their sun to save it. There they will have to brave a very extreme environment and interact with a fire elemental ruler which is large enough to fit the entire party in the palm of his hand. When befriended, he is able to return the city. And the characters have saved the day again. The End.

My Random Notes, Thoughts & Reviews

OK - first off - why didn't the wizards just teleport the characters back to their Kingdom? Why did they have to ride a giant spacefaring beast? I don't know. It doesn't make sense. But it does make for a better adventure I guess.

OK - so they rode this giant beast back to Trann, why couldn't it be used to transport the army? On the one hand the creature is said to be big enough to carry 1000 men, but then it is said there are too many men to transport. What? The players could certainly mount some kind of raid behind enemy lines or something. Seriously.

When traveling through the inner and middle levels of islands to get to the outer level, it is suggested that Durhan is mentioned many times as raiding out here. However, isn't there a "bewildering diversity of nations and cultures"? Do none of the other nations or cultures come out to the middle or inner rings of islands? Hmm...

This star system of Eloysia does present and pretty huge and endless potential area for adventuring - if the characters want. I just think of the Star Trek Next Generation episode where they discovered the Dyson Sphere. The pure square miles of something like that is just beyond my ability to adequately develop. The possibilities for that amount of real estate are absolutely endless. There could be an entire campaign developed right here.

I'm personally a big fan of Spelljammer, and I just don't like it when that is missing. Ok, yes, spelljammer stuff came out some years after this module. Good point. I would integrate spelljammer in here somehow. I'm just saying - spelljammer - use it.

The whole weird artifact thing that Durhan uses - I don't know that I like it. It is an interesting concept, but the execution is just strange - it just seems more mechanical and less fantasy to me. But hey - one man's trash is another man's treasure. If I thought about it for a while I'm sure I'd come up with a cool alternate implementation. But this write-up is getting long and I want to move on.

I'm also not sure about having to travel into the sun to save the PC's city. There isn't really that much to do beyond just having a new and interesting and completely different experience. But I suppose super high level powerful PCs need something to do that is different, and traveling into the sun is definitely different.

In Conclusion

M4 Five Coins For A Kingdom felt like it broke away from the other master level modules in that it broke away from the Norworld setting. I'm not saying that is a bad thing, just an observation. It introduce this vast new area to explore and has suitably epic goals to achieve. I liked the module, I would make some changes as DM just like I would with just about every module, but this one definitely expands the vision of me as a DM as to what to do with these super high level characters.