

Charm of Increasing – A Marvelous Treasure

Story Type: Action/Adventure

Goal: Retrieve the lost Charm of Increasing for Baron Sekkady from the ruin of Ankitchku.

Adventure Synopsis: The Baron of Sekkady needs cash. More specifically, he needs to get a lot of cash growing quickly to expand the economy and prepare it for trade with the Prreshtuwan Federation. One way to do that is to take advantage of the magical prosperity that a certain legendary item might offer.

The Charm of Increasing is a minor artifact affecting wealth and fortune. When claimed by an owner, it doubles the size of the owner's wealth and holdings each year. It operates for seven years, and then must be willingly released by the owner or an increasing likelihood of catastrophe occurs. When released, it cannot be given to another, but mysteriously "loses itself" until found again by a worthy person who does have a desire for material wealth.

Having had the good luck to find hints about the Charm recently, the Baron's advisors recommended the PC's for the retrieval mission. They had little or no desire for wealth or luxury and a strong (if good-humored) sense of duty and honor. Commander Ryswarden sent for the scouts. Their success with the Prreshtuwan prrex also enhanced the Commander's assessment of their worthiness.

Setup: The scouts receive a mission from Commander Ryswarden of the Scouts. The Baron needs to help Sekkady prosper and grow in wealth very quickly in order to counter challenges from powerful enemies. The Charm of Increasing will bring good fortune to make this possible. It was last known to be in the possession of the kenku archmage, Bluebeak, in the city of Ankitchku. Unfortunately, Ankitchku disappeared in a huge ball of green fire in 2155. The Baron's wizard, Master Ulisamaar, has determined that the Charm is still on this plane near the site of Ankitchku.

Plot: Geographic Progression

Heroes (Party Level 11): Copper (Rog3/Mart2/Psi5), Rik (Rgr1/Drd9), Bram (Rgr4/Ftr2/Wiz3), Karenina (Clr5/Wit3). (Note: Party is +2 effective levels due to high-tech energy weapons and over-average wealth.)

Allies: Dark Valpex (in the guise of a friendly pseudodragon named "Bix").

Neutrals: Peekwetto "Master Pee" (Kenku Master).

Primary Villains: Catamathraxxor (Mature Adult male Green Dragon, CR 15), Equimaxxor (Adult Female Green Dragon, CR 12).

Secondary Villains: Silamathrym (Juvenile Green Dragon, CR 7), Kiwishta (Tabaxi Ass7/Rog5).

Monster Encounters: Red Slaadi (CR 7), Blue Slaadi (CR 8), Green Slaadi (CR 9).

Obstacles: The site of the former city of Ankitchku is a shimmering stew of green chaos flames. Master Pee must be persuaded to give the PC's the key word to create a door.

Tricks/Traps: Dragon lair traps.

Finale: rewrite.

Encounter – The Wizard Speaks (EL –)

Master Ulisamaar briefs the party about the Charm of Increasing. He describes it (a small woven gold ball, like a tea strainer on a fine gold chain necklace). He cautions the scouts not to touch the charm with bare flesh or it will adopt the person who does as its new owner. This would make the charm useless to the Baron for a year. Master Ulisamaar explains what he has divined of the item's history and location. He then sends the scouts to a forest oracle for further information on the whereabouts of the Charm of Increasing.

Pseudo-random Encounter – Goblin Patrol (EL 6)

A strong patrol of goblin skulkers encounters the party. This is a group of four Rog2 goblins. They have heard of the scouts, and would be

happy to let Graf Speergen know that they are back in Sekkady.

Encounter – The Forest Oracle (EL 8)

The forest oracle is a mighty treant. He is well-disposed to Rik (the druid), and offers the party an easy riddle to judge their worthiness, instead of the usual brain-bender he customarily asks. The riddle is, “I have veins, but no gold. Green to brown to grow old. What am I?” (Answer: A leaf.) The oracle speaks, “For the charm to change hands, there must be just cause. Behind the gold bands, it lies trapped by greed’s claws. Of the pact in the dark, we can give you a warning. Opposed is a lark, who takes flight every morning. Seek out the bird, for he holds the key. A mystery word, so the charm shall be free. Take care where you go, and dare not to roam. For the powerful shadow, makes Ankitchku his home.”

Pseudo-random Encounter – Hungry Sleeks (EL 8)

Eight hungry sleeks (are there any other kind?) swarm out of the bushes toward the PC’s. They take 10 on their initial Hide checks, for a result of 23.

Sleek: CR2; Small-size magical beast; HD 3d8+6; hp 21; Init +13 (+9 Dex, +4 Imp. Init.); Spd 90 ft.; AC 22; Atk bite +14 melee (1d8+1, 19-20/x2 crit); AL N; SA attach, blood drain 1d4 temporary Con; SV Fort +5, Ref +12, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 28, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills & Feats: Hide +13, Move Silently +13, Spot +7; Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (bite).

Encounter – Silamathrym, Green Dragon (EL 7)

The party encounters a hunting juvenile green dragon; an old enemy. If Silamathrym escapes (and he will attempt to do so after taking just a bit of injury), he goes to warn his parents.

Location – Kenku Bones (EL –)

The party happens across a site where avian bones are piled haphazardly inside small, regular toadstool rings. The forest seems gloomier here. There is nothing special to be learned here (Flavor Encounter).

Encounter – Old Man with a Wheelbarrow (EL 8)

An old man with a wheelbarrow is hauling wood for his fireplace. He is what he appears to be, and his name is Johann Beaks. He knows how to find Master Pee (and is friends with the kenku), but does not volunteer this unless asked specifically. If the adventurers do something very nice for him, he will help them (receiving the experience award). There are feathers about his little log home.

Encounter – Pseudodragon Warning (EL 11)

A small winged creature zips past the party, then wings back to warn them of a band of trolls coming right toward them! He then zips up into a tree to watch what happens. There are eight trolls in the band, and they are out hunting for kenku with large bows. They have strong, light cord tied to their arrows so that the kenku can’t fly away. They will be just as happy to catch and eat humans as kenku.

After the encounter, the pseudodragon returns and introduces himself as Bix. He is inquisitive and natteringly helpful. He will ingratiate himself to the party and contrive to come along, if they give him a small share of the shiny stuff they find.

Location – The Edge of the City

The adventurers reach the edge of the crater of Ankitchku. Wispy green flames roil through the enormous crater, as if the city had disappeared into the flames just an hour or so before. The crater is about 100 ft. deep and slightly less than a mile across. Bix warns against entering the crater, pointing out that the flames are fires of chaos and that people seem to disappear when they go in. “The dragons don’t seem to have that

problem,” he points out, “so they must know a special way, like the kenku.”

Encounter – A Hunting Dragon (EL 12)

The green dragon, Equimaxxor, circles up out of the flames and into the sky. She spies the party and observes from a relatively safe height of 1,000 feet. If threatened, she makes a fly-by breath attack after boosting herself with spells. If this doesn't seem to work, she flies even higher and watches for an hour before drifting off to hunt over the forest. She returns at sunset and glides down into the flames.

Encounter – A Bird in the Morning (EL 12)

In the morning, Master Pee wheels above the flames in a martial acrobatic display. This is his morning exercise. Master Pee needs to be convinced that the heroes will dispatch all three dragons before he will show them how to brave the chaos. This may require testing their combat skills. If the party can easily best him, Master Pee will be satisfied. He will also show them a good place to rest up and prepare for the fight. He explains that the key to entering the chaos safely is to enter the chaos from above and not from the ground.

Master Pee will also offer to teach them a very useful phrase to use against the dragons. He claims that it must be used when confronting the dragons in their home, or the PCs' quest will be a failure. He proceeds to teach them the phrase, “These three green dragons are such weaklings! They can't even open a soft little gold cage!” in draconic. Master Pee says that if the phrase is used an even number of times, it will enrage the dragons. [What Master Pee does not say is that this is the command phrase to close and lock or unlock and open the Zagy's Prison in which the Charm is trapped.]

Encounter – Into the Chaos (EL 5)

The swirling fiery chaos does 4d4 chaotic damage per round of contact. It is not actually fire, but more like highly acidic vapor. If entered

from above, the flames disappear, as if polarized out of existence.

Beyond the veil of chaos is a great ruin. Steaming hulks of buildings twisted into odd shapes slouch about as if they were marshmallows fresh from the campfire. A particularly large building like a Doctor Seuss creation squats in the rough center of the ruined city. It appears to be occupied. Here and there are strange warty beings of several colors. They seem quite large and burly. They are performing different tasks or none at all. In fact, quite a few are simply lying back as if basking in the sun.

Encounter Series – Real Slaad, don'tcha think? (EL 9-11)

Random encounters with slaadi might include: 2 Red (EL 9), 3 Red (EL 11), 2 Blue (EL 10), 1 Green (EL 9), 1 Green and 2 Red (EL 11), 1 Green and 1 Blue (EL10). The party will have any number of encounters, depending upon their actions. Slaadi are aggressive, and will want to prove themselves against the adventurers unless they witness the defeat of a clearly superior slaad.

Slaadi from the city will also want to pelt the dragons with stones, spells, garbage, cabbages, and anything else available if it appears that the lawful evil dragons are getting beaten. Likewise, if the PC's look like they're being bested, the slaadi might jeer at or attack them.

Slaadi have their own treasure tucked into their apartments. Essentially, this city is a great vacation spot for the beasts of Limbo. When Ankitchku was accidentally transferred to Limbo, the slaadi held open the portal and charged admission. The portal is centered in a swiss cheese tower leaning over a main street in the ruined city. It is well guarded by green slaadi and a host of blue and red servitors.

Encounter – The Dragon's Lair (EL 15 or 16)

Catamathraxxor and Equimaxxor (if both are still alive and present) are prepared for the PC's. They detect their approach unless all party

members make DC 36 Hide and Move Silently checks (from Catamathraxxor taking 10 on Spot and Listen). Invisibility will not help, but will add a +10 circumstance bonus on the Hide roll. Likewise for a silence spell on the Move Silently roll.

One dragon will take flight while the other one becomes invisible and awaits the adventurers in the paved court in front of the building. They switch off attacks, concentrating on whoever appears likely to be most powerful. They realize that they do not have healing, while human adventurers often do, and stay out of reach as much as possible.

If necessary, they will allow their hoard to be plundered while they fly high overhead. The dragons reason that they can always track down the thieves and ambush them when they regain their strength.

In the great hall is the dragons' treasure—including the golden birdcage inside of which is a little parrot doll on a perch. The Charm of Increasing is woven into the parrot's head (Spot DC 20 or Search DC 15 to notice).

Dragon treasure: *Charm of Increasing*, *Zagy's Prison*, 16,000 gp, 1,200 pp, 250 gems worth 50 gp each, 20 art objects worth 1,000 gp each, *potion of swimming*, *gloves of swimming and climbing*, *scroll of mending*, *scroll of 3 spells (magic missile, blur, darkvision)*, *scroll of 3 spells (barkskin, aid, augury)*, *potion of spider climb*, *cloak of resistance +1*, *wand of silence*, *scroll of 4 spells (cloudkill, charm monster, emotion, domination)*, *scroll of summon monster IV*, *monk's belt*, *ring of acid resistance 30*, *bracers of armor +5*, *ring of fire resistance 30*.

Encounter – Cat Scratch Fever (EL 12)

After emerging from the ruin (presumably with the Charm in their possession) and before returning to the Baron's Citadel, the adventurers are spotted by a tabaxi assassin, Kiwishta. She has been contracted by Graf Speergen to dispatch them and will attempt to strike when she can do so with surprise, preferably at night in the victim's room.