

THE MADCAP LAUGHS

Setting The Scene For New Stormbringer Adventures

by Matt Williams

Over the next two months in *White Dwarf*, you will have the opportunity to take part one of the deadliest adventures ever to occur in the Young Kingdoms. In this issue, for GMs only, we present a background to the adventure. Here you will read of a plan, the consequences of which affect the gods themselves. You may examine the the bizarre cast of characters, the intended deeds and the politics of Chaos. And you may meet the creature - the entity - responsible for the whole story. Read on then, and be prepared for the Beginning...

In the realm of the gods of Chaos, there is one with a purpose so twisted, of such extreme unpredictability, that although his strength is considerable, it remains hidden behind the apparent innocence of a smile. His name is Balo - the Jester of Chaos.

Before there was a moment to pass in the world of the Young Kingdoms, he conceived of a race that would worship him above all other gods. He created the Essegraani, and bestowed gifts of sorcery upon them. But to his horror, they did not thank him. And they did not worship him. Instead they found comfort and happiness in the teachings of Law. Balo was infuriated. He had erred on a scale that would cost him dearly.

He was mocked and humiliated by the gods of Law, scorned by the gods of Chaos. It was not long however, before a thought occurred to him - a thought which returned the sickly smile to his lips. He cursed the Essegraani by revealing himself Amma-y-Graan, a supposed god of Law, whom the Essegraani welcomed and worshipped. Then, as Balo, he returned to banish the race to a plane of Chaos, where they would suffer in aeons of nightmare ridden sleep.

Amid the thousands of tortured souls, he found one - Ziamora - the Queen and High Priestess of the Essegraani. Manifesting in the guise of the false god Amma-y-Graan, he pretended to use the last of his powers to awaken and free Ziamora, sending her on a quest to find an item identified only as The Key of Mirikos. Ziamora was made to believe that only this key could free her people and her god. She set about her task immediately/inspired by hatred for any who might stand in her way...

Balo began laughing.

At this point the adventurers are introduced. Balo has planned their meeting for generations, watching over his creation as a mother watches her child. The adventurers are fated, caught in this cosmic outrage against all sorcery and nature.

For the punchline, Balo intends to assemble representatives of Law and Chaos, Ziamora and the adventurers - assuming they are still alive. On releasing her imprisoned god, Ziamora will discover it is Balo. His revelation that he set up the whole situation, including creating and cursing the Essegraani, will infuriate the champions of Law and Chaos, and their masters. Ziamora will be grief-stricken. Balo's sense of humour is decidedly warped.

The forthcoming adventures for the *Stormbringer* roleplaying game link together to make a single world-spanning tale. The episodes will appear over the next two months. Although the adventures are part of a whole, any amount of time can elapse between them. There may be other encounters, interludes to recuperate or periods for research and training. Provided the gamemaster has grasped the central thread of Balo's prank, things will keep moving smoothly. For gamemasters who wish to keep their version of the Young Kingdoms free from demonic humour, the adventures can be run independently with minor cosmetic changes.

Each adventure should take more than one session to complete. If you wish to expand them further, suggested methods are given at the end of each section. Finally, these adventures are written in the spirit of the *Elric* saga, and occasionally the dice may dictate a path out of spirit with the books. At such times, apply your own interpretation of the saga as a guide.

THE ADVENTURERS

The adventures are designed for a group of 5-9 adventurers with moderate fighting skills, including at least one sorcerer. Ideally, none should be agents of Chaos. I have assumed the characters have had a handful of minor adventures in the past, but that this could be their first taste of the stuff of legends.

Since Balo is keen to see his joke come to fruition, he will take good care of the elements involved. Characters may narrowly escape death if they make the joke better as a result. Even though they have this dubious patronage, don't let the adventurers get away with anything. Balo will only alter their luck if they have strived to enliven his creation.

Although the outcome is ultimately predetermined, the adventurers still have their free will. They may opt out at any time to follow their own interests. And there is the slim chance they may inadvertently upset matters, or realise what's going on and exploit the situation. The adventurers may drift in and out of the ribaldry as they please, although Balo will be upset if they have the cheek to ignore many millenia of preparations. In this case, the joke's on him, and the irony of it all will send him laughing across the planes of Chaos.

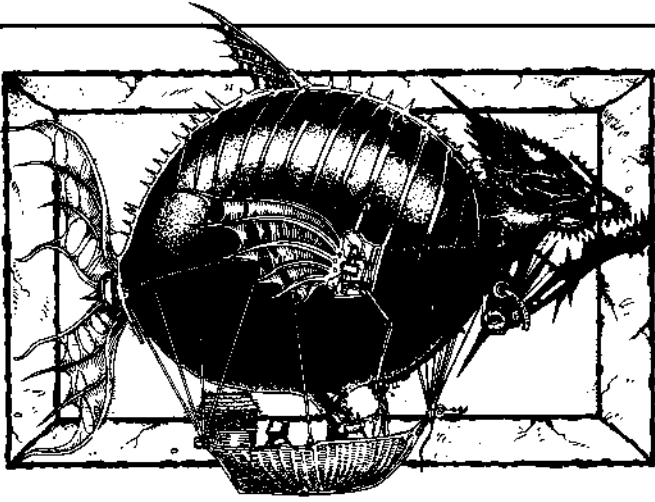
CHARACTER DEATH

The characters are not immune from dying. On the contrary, several of them will die in the course of the adventures. Ideally, each episode should begin with at least one character from the previous adventure still living. This way the links in the storyline are not forced unnecessarily.

If all the characters die unexpectedly, and the gamemaster wishes to have them finish the saga, Balo can restore them to life. Balo may appear in disguise and resurrect them. Characters who have died because of their stupidity should not be allowed this 'privilege'. Only those characters who have amused Balo will earn his patronage.

THE CAST

To assist the gamemaster, the major characters are introduced below, with a note as to how they fit into the adventure.



Darsu Dhberac

Dhberac is an agent of Mabelrode, the Faceless God. He and his patron have become the unwilling butt of Balo's humour. Dhberac thinks he is on a mission to increase the power of Chaos in the Young Kingdoms. In reality he is no more than a pawn in Balo's jest.

Ziamora

The last queen of a sleeping race; sorceress and High Priestess, lonely ruler of the Emerald Shore, Ziamora is a proud and tragic figure. She believes that her quest to free Amma-y-Graan - the Banished God - and her people, is nearly over. Unfortunately, Balo fabricated the whole affair, and she will be cheated of her moment of triumph.

Ziamora is the most important non-player character, featuring in some way throughout the adventure. She is an arch-enemy in the mould of Theleb K'aarna or Fu Man Chu. She is a villainess the characters will best only after many encounters. The gamemaster should grant her immunity from death until the climax is reached.

Amma-y-Graan, the Banished God

Supposedly imprisoned by Balo, Amma-y-Graan is, in fact, Balo in disguise. In this role he is god of the Essegraani, and his one priestess is Ziamora.

The Key of Mirikos

Created by Balo at the dawn of the Young Kingdoms, this trinket forms the focal point of the adventure. The Key which will release him from his 'prison' and thus bring his joke to fruition.

Torvlim Nosam

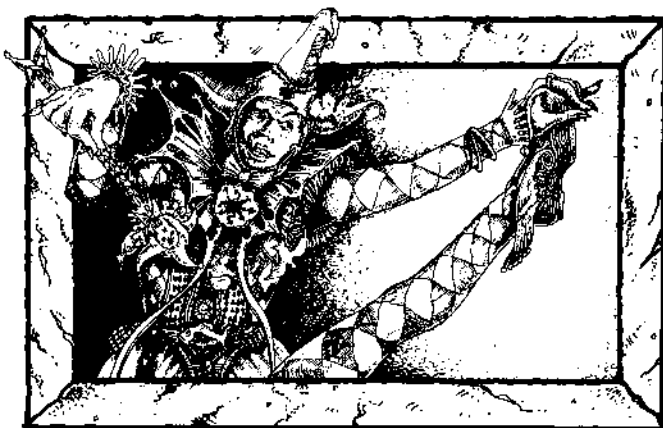
A ridiculous poet playing a minor, decorative role, but an infernal nuisance to all who meet him.

Ellshara

A princess of Lormyr.

Rallup Yar

A hermit who keeps a secret he cannot tell. Unfortunately, he has to tell it...



Illustrated by Tony Hough

Meldic the Golden

Rarely does one man have the power to upset the equilibrium between the Lords of Law and Chaos. The adventurers should tread carefully when dealing with this character.

OVERALL OUTLINE

It should be more satisfying to run this mini-campaign as separate adventures connected by a few coincidences and common elements. The gamemaster is free to present the players with clues as seems fit, and to let them draw their own conclusions about the overall design. The three adventures fit into Balo's prank as follows.

1. A Heart of Dust, A Hand of Death

The characters are drawn in to his scheme, Darsu Dhberac, Ziamora and the Key of Mirikos are introduced.

2. Ruins in Madness

An interlude. This is not so directly related, although a number of elements prepare for the final episode, and some old enemies appear to have a hand in matters.

3. Empress on the Emerald Shore

Events set in motion in the first and second episodes are concluded. All the different threads are woven into Balo's punchline.

HISTORICAL NOTE

The campaign is set after the sack of Imrryr. If the GM chooses to set them at another time, some of the information may have to be changed slightly to preserve the continuity.

AIRSHIPS OF THE PRIESTS OF LAW

Throughout Moorcock's fantasy work, the airship is a recurring emblem. Airships are well suited to the esoteric environment of the Young Kingdoms. But although we are frequently told of the technological nature of Law, examples are rarely covered in detail. Airships will help to fill this niche.

The knowledge needed to build and fly these airships belongs to the priests of Law, who will sell it - for a very high price - to their most loyal servants. However, they should be used sparingly. Examination of the rules below will reveal the enormous cost and difficulty involved in constructing these vessels, and their appearance in *The Madcap Laughs* clearly illustrates the kind of circumstances that should prevail when you want to incorporate them into your game.

The majesty of these airborne wonders demands closer attention. And so...

Airship Composition

An airship can be of any shape, provided it combines the two basic components: balloon and gondola.

Balloons

The minimum SIZ for a balloon is 30. Such a balloon would lift one man into the skies. For every 3 SIZ a balloon has, it can lift 1 SIZ point of payload. This is assuming the Gondola is made of wicker. If a wooden or metal gondola is used, it can lift 1 SIZ per 6 points of its SIZ rating.

Balloon skins can be fashioned from silk, canvas and so forth. The skins must be relatively airtight. Constructing a balloon skin is expensive and time consuming, so only the largest of the temples of Law will be able to amass the skill and finance required to make one. The time element required for the process will equal 2D6+2 x SIZ man-years. Thus, one man constructing a SIZ 100 balloon must labour for 400 to 1400 years continuously. 50 workers need only 8 to 28 years, or 18 years on average. Once the balloon skin is finished, the Balloonmaster in charge must make a ballooning roll at half

normal percentage. If successful, the skin is functional. If the roll is fumbled, then the skin is flawed and will rip when tested. A critical success indicates an exceptional piece of workmanship - the balloon will be twice as durable as normal.

Gondolas

Travel by airship means using a gondola. This is a basket or enclosed cabin slung beneath the ballon and attached by rope or cable. Wicker gondolas have no weight for game purposes. The maximum SIZ a wicker gondola can hold is 80. Wicker Gondolas take one man week per SIZ point they can hold to manufacture and they can be made by a master basket maker under the supervision of a Balloonmaster. At the end of the manufacture period, both the basket maker and Balloonmaster must make a skill roll at half ability, or the gondola is flawed and useless.

Wood and metal gondolas can be made up to any capacity. Balloons with wood or metal gondolas have to be much bigger than their wicker carrying counterparts in order to lift the extra weight. They require four man-weeks per SIZ point they are to carry. They can be made by master carpenters or blacksmiths accompanied by a Balloonmaster. Skill rolls must then be applied in the same fashion as above to ensure the integrity of the gondola.

Assembly

Once all the components are made, they must be fitted together under the supervision of the Balloonmaster. This character must make another successful balloon skill roll at half chance or the equipment requires another 2D4 months work. On a fumble, an accident is assumed to have happened (such as a rip being made in the balloon skin).

Once completed, the airship must be inflated with lighter than air gases, or have hot burners fitted. If the vehicle is not to be permanently at the whim of the wind, motive engines should also be attached. The gondola can also be fitted out as required - wooden or metal ones may resemble ship's cabins, for instance. When all this has been done, the airship is ready for flight.

Engines

The speed of wind powered balloons depends on the wind itself. Those fitted with engines have a top speed of 20km/h. All airships move with a DEX of 3.

Motive power can be provided by sorcery. Demons, Virtues of Transport or sylphs can be bound in sufficient quantity to move the airship as desired. Typically, the POW of the bound creatures must equal the total balloon SIZ/10 to provide sufficient motive power. The maximum speed of the vessel will be equal to the creatures' POW/3 km/h. The airship will be able to fly non-stop for a number of hours equal to their combined CON. Thereafter, the engines must be rested for 4D6 hours or they will burn up one by one.

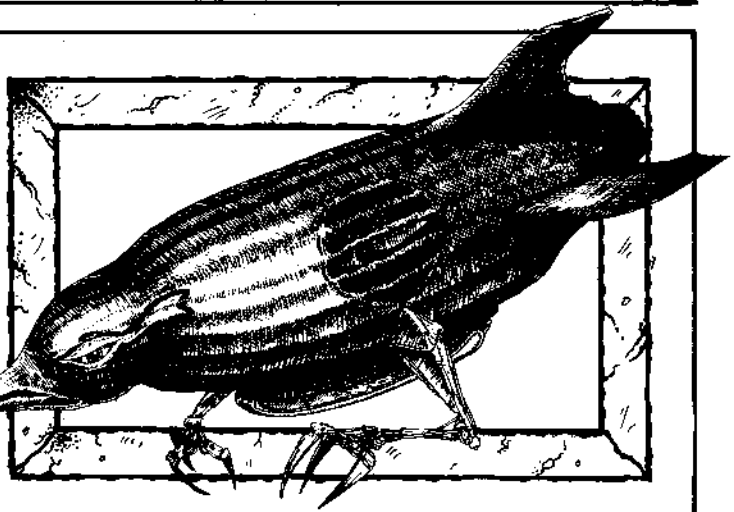
Airships can descend or ascend by controlling the volume of gas and ballast carried. They are very sensitive to wind currents, rain, hail and other stormy weather.

Armour

Balloon skins have up to one point of natural resistance to damage. Wicker gondolas will absorb 1D4-1 points, metal or wooden ones 1D8-1. Airships requiring more armour must take advantage of sorcery. A Demon of Virtue or Protection may be bound into the balloon skin or gondola. The being's SIZ must equal that entire airship (ie balloon and gondola).

Randomly Generated Airships

If the gamemaster needs to create an airship in a hurry, the following parameters apply. They show the usual type of airship encountered. Occasionally, it's possible to meet with extraordinary airships. These may be armed, gleaming



leviathons of the air, or small, zippy personal craft. The exact nature of such objects is left to the discretion of the GM.

SIZ 30+10D100* DEX 3 HP SIZ/10**

ARMOUR: 3D10-10***

SPEED: 2D10+10 km/h****

* This is the size of the airship. Those of SIZ 240 or less will have wicker gondolas. Larger ones have a 70% chance of being made of wood. Otherwise they are constructed of metal. A small SIZ indicates a hot air balloon, while larger ones are indicative of Zeppelin-style craft.

** These Hit Points relate to the gondola. Once the gondolas takes more than half its hit points in damage, it becomes unsafe and characters within stand the risk of falling out. Balloons are very delicate. A balloon which takes more than one point of damage is seriously holed. A balloon filled with flammable gas which receives a critical hit will explode, doing 1D6 per 10 SIZ damage to all those in the gondola or otherwise in close proximity.

*** Negative values indicate that the balloon is unarmoured. The gondola will absorb 1D4-1 or 1D8-1 depending upon whether it is wicker or wood/metal. Ratings over 1 indicate magical protection. The gamemaster will have to create a Demon of Virtue or Protection separately.

**** Ratings over 20 indicate magical propulsion. Ratings under 5 indicate that the vessel is wind powered.

Ballooning

This is a new skill for *Stormbringer*. A character with Ballooning is skilled in the maintenance and flight of airships of all types, allowing safe piloting of the vessel under normal circumstances. Once such characters become Balloonmasters, they understand the method of construction fully, and may supervise the building of new airships to any chosen design.



THE MADCAP LAUGHS

A HEART OF DUST, A HAND OF DEATH

by Matt Williams

INTRODUCTION

This is the first adventure in *The Madcap Laughs* series. The outline of the campaign was dealt with in last month's *White Dwarf*, a copy of which is required if the intention is to follow the campaign closely. However, GM's will have enough information here to use this as a one off adventure without knowledge of the campaign structure.

GM'S INTRODUCTION

This adventure is set in the Weeping Waste and assumes the starting location of the characters to be either in, or near, the city of Karlaak. The party will have to journey across the desert in search of an ancient tower where a nobleman's children are held captive.

Darsu Dhberac, a nobleman of Karlaak, has had his son and daughter kidnapped; carried off by bandits into the Weeping Wastes. Dhberac needs to hire a group of talented adventurers to find and recover them, and return a family treasure worn by his daughter - the Key of Mirikos. Dhberac will pay a reward for freeing his children, plus a bonus for the heirloom's return.

In fact, the bandits were hired by Ziamora, the powerful inhuman enchantress. She has spirited the children to an ancient tower amid the Scarlet Shoals in the Weeping Waste and used sorcery to secure their hiding place. Ziamora believes the Key of Mirikos will release her race from a ten thousand year slumber on a nether plane. While she is seeking the correct rituals for this in the Young Kingdoms, she has made the tower her base.

SWORDS FOR HIRE

Dhberac will contact the characters via his servant, Graman, who will meet the party at a suitable point either just as they approach the city of Karlaak, or shortly thereafter. The exact location of the encounter is left to your discretion. Read this to the players:

The road ahead is blocked by a richly dressed, hooded man who sits astride a horse led by a page. From beneath the hooded man's cowl, you can see the ravages of age upon his face. Closer inspection reveals areas of stretched skin that cover the eye sockets. But despite his shocking appearance, a reassuring smile spreads across his face.

He greets you by name, though you have never seen him before.

'Greetings from my noble lord,' he cries. I bear you a message.'



Graman's only purpose is to disseminate certain information to the PCs. He will be civil and identify himself. He will not enter any discussion regarding the message, but might provide other information, perhaps advising on a good inn where the characters may rest safely after their journey. His page is mute. Neither of them are armed or possess any fighting ability. If attacked, they will succumb easily.

After reciting the message Graman will leave. If the adventurers pester him he will issue threats ('If I do not return by sunset, your kidneys will be my master's next breakfast'). If they decide to follow him, allow them to stay on his tail for a short while before losing Graman and the page in the city's crowded streets.

Graman has a perfect memory (99%) and will report precisely what happens on returning to his master. If the characters torture or kill Graman, Dhberac will exact revenge in a range of ingenious but ultimately lethal ways.

If the characters accept the message, read them this.

'Two days hence in Karlaak, follow the golden woman who collects a pitcher from the East Gate at dusk. Follow her wherever she goes and you will meet my master. He will pay each of you your weight in silver in exchange for a small favour. Not a word of this shall pass your lips, or the bargain is forfeit, and your souls on their way to Limbo. I must return alone. Let your actions be your answer.'

If the characters pay Graman no heed and seem reluctant to become involved, don't worry. Allow two days of uneventful game time to elapse (see below). Encourage them to remain in Karlaak before running The Golden Woman encounter.

Graman, Dhberac's servant

STR 8 CON 9 SIZ 12 INT 16 POW 15 DEX 5 CHA 14 HP 9

No effective attacks

Skills: Credit 60%, Listen 80%, Memorize 99%, Move Quietly 44%, Music Lore 60%, Ride 50%

Mute Page

STR 8 CON 11 SIZ 6 INT 10 POW 9 DEX 12 CHA 12 HP 5

No effective attacks

Skills: Balance 40%, Dodge 40%, Listen 60%, Move Quietly 35%



KARLAAK

Karlaak is a typical Ilmorian city, a bustling town surrounded by well-tended farm estates. It is not as cosmopolitan as the sea-ports, and has a slight frontier feel because of all the expeditions to the Weeping Wastes. However, nearly all the fruits of civilisation can be found somewhere within its streets, just like any other large city.

EVENTS - KARLAAK

While the adventurers are in Karlaak, you may want to use some of the events listed below to add flavour to the adventure and give the PC's some idea of what Karlaak is really like. Some of the events will require GM development.

Beggars

The characters are beset by 2D4 beggars begging alms. If they are charitable and give them food or money, an extra 2D8 beggars will crowd round for a handout within five minutes. In the fuss, one of the

characters will have his pocket picked. The thief has 50% Cut Purse and 30% Dagger.

The Engine

In a square is a huge steam-powered water-pump drawing water into a well. The pump has gone amok and is flooding the square. The emergency is being directed by Takiren Vandan, a harried priest of Law. If the characters somehow remedy the situation, the priest will give them a compass in thanks.

Forbidden Fruit

A seedy-looking street-vendor will sidle up to the characters and ask them if they want to buy his exotic fruit. He will claim all sorts of wondrous properties for it. You will experience dreams beyond your imagination, he says, you will become invulnerable to heat or cold, you will become desired above any man/woman in the world. His price is 300 LB for a bag of seven, but he can be knocked down to 100. The fruit, a small knobby fig with a ruddy skin, has no such properties. As soon as he has made a sale, or it's clear the characters aren't conned, he will lope away into the back streets. The vendor is unarmed.

Urchins

Two street-urchins playing in the street will stray in the path of a character. They will run round him a few times then dart off happily down the street. While they circle his legs the grubby children will wrap a rope round his legs and knot it. A conspirator will tie the hitched end to a near-by horse and slap its flank with brambles. As the horse runs off, the character will be dragged down the street for 2d100 yards, taking 1 point of damage per 10 yards (ignore armour, bumping down the street in metal isn't very comfortable).

A character will spot the ruse on a *See* roll, and can then escape on rolling POW x5 or less. If the character can roll STR x1, the horse will be stopped in its tracks, unharmed. Anyone who sees this will be suitably impressed.

TWO DAYS

The characters will have up to two days to do what they wish. Judicious inquiries in the right area will reveal a little about Graman's master. However, Dhberac has spies in the city and enquiries will have to be kept quiet to make sure he doesn't find out. If the characters leak the reason behind their enquiries, there is a 30% chance that the spies will hear of it and report back to Dhberac. This will mean a nine tenths reduction in payment, though Dhberac will wait until the mission is finished to tell them this.

While in the city, the characters may replenish supplies, buy new weapons and equipment, and sample the local colour. Nothing much should happen until their rendezvous.

THE GOLDEN WOMAN

At dusk, two days after the message is delivered, a beautiful woman with gold-tinted skin will collect a water pitcher from the East Gate. She is lightly robed in green silk. The adventurers will have no trouble spotting her if they received the message. Otherwise, bring her to the attention of any character making a successful *See* roll. She will be aware of them before they see her.

The woman is Jenoola, a Demon of Desire, ordered by Dhberac to lead the adventurers to him. When she has filled the pitcher, she will make her way through the back streets away from the gate, always keeping some distance between herself and the PCs. Jenoola will use her ability to teleport the party to their final destination if they do not follow her.

Whatever the course of action chosen by the characters, they are destined to confront Dhberac in his house, two days after encountering Graman. If they were unaware of the suggested rendezvous with Jenoola, or happen to be otherwise engaged in some area of the city, you may assume that Jenoola tracks them down during the evening. Any character making a successful *See* roll will observe a pretty blond haired woman smiling at them before their surroundings suddenly change to those of Dhberac's study (see *Dhberac's Home* below).

Assuming the characters do tail Jenoola, their last sight of her will be to see her passing through a gate at the end of a cul-de-sac. Once through this, they will find themselves in the courtyard of Dhberac's house.

The courtyard is a narrow square, surrounded by high buildings adorned with gargoyles. Most of the windows are shuttered. Inside, the

rooms are dark and connected by winding corridors, filled with exquisite *objets d'art*.

DHBERAC'S HOME

When the party arrive, they will be ushered to Dhberac's study by the page boy who escorted Graman earlier. Dhberac will be staring into a huge wall mirror at the far end of the poorly lit room. Graman will be present, standing silhouetted in front of a low hanging chandelier. After a moment, Dhberac will sit down in silence behind his desk, and speak. If the PCs were teleported to this location by Jenoola, he will begin by profusely and sincerely apologising for his methods. You may then read the following passage to the players.

'Brave souls, I am in need of your help. A week ago, my only children, Hanamel and Cyrona, were plucked from this very house by outlaws. No ransom has been asked for and I fear their lives are in danger. To breach the security of this house, the bandits must be cunning and dangerous. Only the most skilful men will best them, which is why I have selected you. I will pay you well - your weight in silver - and a bonus if you recover a family heirloom worn by my daughter. One thing further, the mission is a secret. I expect you to keep my confidence.'

Dhberac is more interested in the Key of Mirikos, an artifact worn by one of his children than in the children themselves. He will not say or do anything to let the party suspect this, however. He will provide sketches of the Key and his children to allow them to be identified, and any equipment the characters request (at the GM's discretion). He will also give the PCs an amulet he thinks may be of some use in their search, and explain how to use it. He also provides the PCs with the following information.

'The bandits have fled into the Weeping Wastes. I expect you to release my children from their clutches alive and well. The abductors' lives are not important to me. If it is of any interest to you, the carpet in my children's chambers was spoiled by red sand. I can only assume that this came from the clothing of one or more of the kidnappers.'

The bonus for the return of the heirloom is 100 Large Gold to be divided between the party members. If the characters demand more money (they may be particularly annoyed if they were teleported to Dhberac's home), the GM may allow some haggling. Dhberac will want to recover any excess payments afterwards however, and this could lead to further adventures.

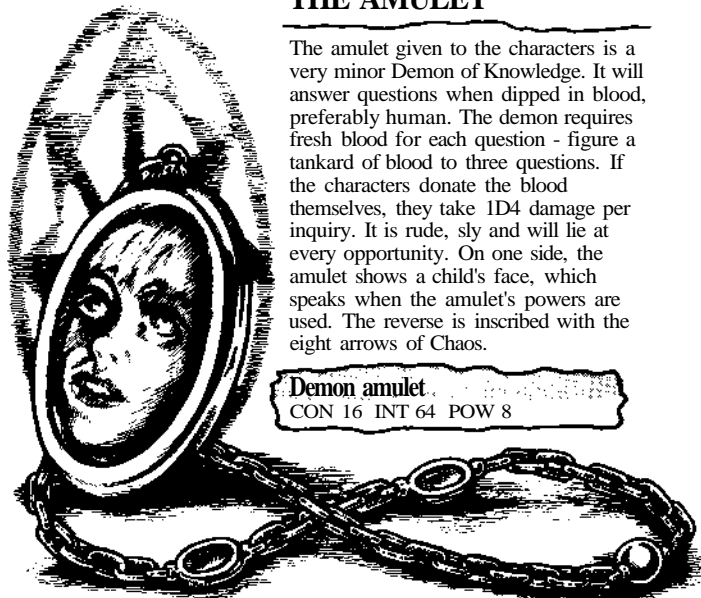
Nor will Dhberac tell them that his own efforts have failed. He has already expended a Demon of Desire trying to regain the artifact, which now appears to be concealed by warding. He has no desire to risk his life against powerful sorcery except as a last resort.

His reasons for keeping the mission secret are vague. He gives the impression that he wants to keep knowledge of the matter from his known enemies. He will also stress the importance of starting out as soon as possible.

THE AMULET

The amulet given to the characters is a very minor Demon of Knowledge. It will answer questions when dipped in blood, preferably human. The demon requires fresh blood for each question - figure a tankard of blood to three questions. If the characters donate the blood themselves, they take 1D4 damage per inquiry. It is rude, sly and will lie at every opportunity. On one side, the amulet shows a child's face, which speaks when the amulet's powers are used. The reverse is inscribed with the eight arrows of Chaos.

Demon amulet.
CON 16 INT 64 POW 8



THE HEIRLOOM - THE KEY OF MIRIKOS

This has been passed down through Dhberac's family for countless generations. His patron deity has revealed it was fabricated from the stuff of Chaos aeons ago. Its only known power is to open any lock. Dhberac's main reason for wanting the key returned is that his scholarly studies lead him to think it has greater powers that have avoided discovery to date. The Key is normally worn as a pendant by Cyrona, his daughter.



DARSU DHBERAC

Darsu Dhberac is slight, young-looking with dark skin and short black hair. He dresses in grey robes (which conceal his sword), adorned with much jewellery. He is cruel but always keeps his word when he feels it has been honourably given. Excessive demands by the adventurers places them beyond such honour.

Unlike other agents of Chaos, he has built up a power base in Karlaak. He is rich and influential with friends in high (and low) places. Few know he serves the Lords of Chaos from his ebony-panelled, labyrinthine house.

Darsu Dhberac, nobleman of Karlaak and agent of Mabelrode
STR 9 CON 12 SIZ 11 INT 17 POW 20 DEX 10 CHA 15 HP 12

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Shortsword	61%	1D6+1	58%
Dagger	35%	1D4+2	35%

Armour: None

Skills: Conceal 44%, Credit 60%, Dodge 48%, Evaluate Treasure 73%, First Aid 25%, Hide 58%, Listen 40%, Memorise 79%, Move Quietly 56%, Plant Lore 40%, Poison Lore 10%, Persuade 81%, See 30%, Search 49%

Languages: Common: Speak 92%, R/W 88%; Low Melnibonean: Speak 60%, R/W 55%; High Melnibonean: Speak 40%, R/W 32%

Summonings: Elemental: Water 96%, Fire 62%; Demons: Desire 98%, Protection 73%

Obviously, Darsu Dhberac is a powerful man, and the characters should realise this. His large fee and the Demon amulet is generous payment for an apparently easy task. Over-generous in fact. The characters should have enough clues to see there is more to this than meets the eye. If they depart unprepared, then they may well die quickly.

Dhberac wears an amulet which will warn him of any intended attack. He keeps it well-hidden, but characters specifically saying they are looking for it may spot it on a *See* roll. Do not forget to take Dhberac's *Conceal* skill into account.

DHBERAC'S DEMONS

Tfosma, Guardian
CON 20 INT 12 POW 23 DEX 13 CHA 15 HP 20

Special Abilities: Ethereal, Life Drain

Tfosma is charged to protect Darsu from direct attack. It appears as a shimmering golden spectre. The demon is ethereal and can only be attacked by magic weapons or sorcery, but itself has no physical attack. The only way it can affect attackers is by using its life drain. Tfosma is immaterial until called to defend its master.

L'rod, Guardian
STR 16 CON 22 SIZ 9 INT 12 POW 9 DEX 18 CHA 1 HP 22

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Claw x 2	56%	2D6	50%
Bite	47%	1D10+1D6 -	

Special Abilities: Invisibility

This Demon may take any form, but usually has that of a giant cat. Bound to one of Dhberac's many rings, it is immaterial until summoned forth to defend him.

Jenoola, Demon of Desire
STR 20 CON 47 SIZ 9 INT 12 POW 9 DEX 10 CHA 22 HP 47

Jenoola is a gift from Mabelrode. She is sly, smiling with luxuriant gold-tinted skin, and serves as Dhberac's slave and lover.

Tebbis, Demon of Knowledge
INT 71 POW 16 CON 20

This demon is bound to an ornate teak wall mirror (in Dhberac's study), 3 metres by 2 metres and reveals its knowledge in pictures. Since this Demon was a gift from the Church of Chaos it does not count towards Dhberac's total for binding. He may use it to impress the adventurers.



THE SEARCH

Searching the Waste is a gigantic task. Shrewd adventurers will use the amulet to put them on the bandits' trail. Listed below are the amulet's answers to the most likely questions. The GM must invent any other replies as needed.

Where have the bandits gone? - 'To Limbo.' True; the bandits have been slain by Ziamora's Demons in the Weeping Waste.

Where are the children/Key of Mirikos now? - 'Such knowledge is hidden by powerful sorcery.' If the Demon rolls its POW or less it can reveal more. 'In the Scarlet Shoals stands a citadel. The sorcery comes from here.' The Scarlet Shoals stretch across part of the Waste; the name derives from the characteristic red sand, not seen anywhere else in the young Kingdoms. Further questioning or a *Legend Lore* roll will reveal this. Any barbarian of the Waste should also know.

Who has taken the children/Key of Mirikos? - 'The sorceress Ziamora, Queen of the Essegraani.' Further questions will uncover more information about Ziamora. How much is up to the GM. The Essegraani do not feature in this scenario directly. Full details are given in the third scenario, *Empress of the Emerald Shore*.

Where is Ziamora? - 'In the Scarlet Shoals.' If it rolls its POW or less, the Demon will go on. 'She stands in a tower constructed of ghosts and shrouded in ancient sorcery. This is all that I see.' The amulet can tell nothing more about the tower, but characters with *Legend Lore* or a barbarian shaman may have heard of the Castle of Lost Souls, a tower built by a long-dead wizard from the souls of dead men somewhere in the Weeping Wastes.



THE WEEPING WASTE

The Weeping Waste is a vast desolate plain stretching eastwards from the edge of Ilmiora. There are few hills and rivers, but trees grow wherever there is a steady water supply. In the extreme south, bordering the Eastern Ocean, are thick woods and jungle. Further from the sea this gives way to sandy, inhospitable scrublands.

The Waste is home to many wild beasts and creatures of Chaos, and its huge expanse conceals many terrors and adventures. The inns of Ilmiora are full of men and women with strange tales of their travels in the depths of the Waste. Many more have died there seeking their fortune.

The safest way to travel into the Waste is with a merchant caravan. Such caravans leave regularly from the cities and towns of eastern Ilmiora to trade weapons and trinkets for the prized barbarian armour and desert bows. A typical tour might last two or three months, leaving heavily laden with metal goods and returning with a cargo of barbarian wares. Skilled fighters should have no trouble finding employment as hired swords on the caravans.

A typical caravan will be headed by a merchant, usually acting for a syndicate. He will have 8-10 wagons, half carrying provisions, the rest transporting 10-20 mercenaries. Caravans generally return with fewer men than they set off with. Wild animals, raiders, Demons, disease or the owner cutting his overheads usually means the death rate can run as high as 50% on one of these tours. Unscrupulous competitors sometimes hire assassins to protect their interests, or murder an incoming caravan and steal the cargo. The adventurers should be made aware of the difficulties they may face.

INTO THE DESERT

When the adventurers are in the Waste, the GM should make use of the events list below. The characters will spend five days in the desert before they reach the Shoals. The first event is fixed. The encounter with the Clakars is variable. However, if it hasn't occurred by the fifth day, it will take place automatically. See below. All other events are optional. At most, there should one encounter per day.

Five Bodies

At noon on the second day, the adventurers will discover five mutilated corpses, about a week old. They have been bloodily slaughtered, but seem untouched by scavengers. Their dress marks them as Esmiri. On a successful *See* roll, a character will find a few grains of reddish sand. These are the fetid remains of the kidnapers. They were slain by Ziamora's Demons who then delivered the children to her.

Clakars

Each day there is a cumulative 10% chance Ziamora will find out Dhberac has sent out a rescue mission. She will dispatch eight clakars to capture one of the adventurers. In the dead of night, they will attack the camp. Unless the sound of beating wings wakes the characters (*Listen* roll), or they have taken suitable precautions, the adventurers will be surprised.

The clakars have orders to bring back a character for questioning. Six of the beasts will cause a rumpus, while two swoop from the air and grab at the weediest-looking adventurer. If a Clakar scores two claw hits, it can pick up - and fly off with - its victim (as long as the character's SIZ is less than a Clakar's STR, otherwise the beast cannot lift him).

The Clakars will only land as a last resort. They are afraid of fire, and will give up if the characters fend them off for more than five minutes

(60 combat rounds). Once in close combat though, they will break away only when seriously injured.

All Clakars have the same attack percentages.

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Bite	40%	1D8	
Claw x 2	60%	2D6	30%
Wing buffet	90%	1D4-1	25%

Clakar One

STR 16 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 7 POW 20 DEX 21 HP 13

Skills: Climb 44%, Listen 23%, Scent 25%, Search 22%, Track 28%

Clakar Two

STR 23 CON 14 SIZ 21 INT 8 POW 12 DEX 16 HP 23

Skills: Climb 43%, Listen 26%, Scent 30%, Search 21%, Track 27%

Clakar Three

STR 18 CON 11 SIZ 15 INT 5 POW 8 DEX 15 HP 14

Skills: Climb 49%, Listen 25%, Scent 25%, Search 29%, Track 23%

Clakar Four

STR 20 CON 17 SIZ 19 INT 9 POW 14 DEX 11 HP 24

Skills: Climb 41%, Listen 26%, Scent 27%, Search 30%, Track 24%

Clakar Five

STR 17 CON 21 SIZ 14 INT 12 POW 11 DEX 19 HP 23

Skills: Climb 47%, Listen 26%, Scent 28%, Search 22%, Track 25%

Clakar Six

STR 15 CON 19 SIZ 11 INT 4 POW 15 DEX 20 HP 19

Skills: Climb 44%, Listen 27%, Scent 22%, Search 25%, Track 21%

Clakar Seven

STR 18 CON 12 SIZ 12 INT 13 POW 7 DEX 14 HP 12

Skills: Climb 45%, Listen 29%, Scent 28%, Search 26%, Track 23%

Clakar Eight

STR 22 CON 21 SIZ 19 INT 6 POW 12 DEX 17 HP 28

Skills: Climb 49%, Listen 30%, Scent 21%, Search 24%, Track 25%

Oasis

The adventurers come across a small spring surrounded by a few sparse shrubs. The water flows sluggishly and tastes sour, but is otherwise fine to drink.

At Arm's Length

Approaching a rise, the adventurers notice a huge bronze hand sticking up into the sky. As they top the rise, they see that it is connected to a gigantic statue which has fallen into the dip below. Originally 30



metres tall, the statue now lies side down, half-buried in the sand. It depicts a threefold creature, one third man, one third woman and one third beast joined at the spine.

Undead Barbarians

As the day comes to an end the party encounter a small, listless group of 2D6+6 barbarian warriors, who offer their hospitality to the adventurers. They look tired and pallid and carry no insignia. Their chief offers the adventurers food and water, and a place by their fire for the night.

If the characters decline, they will be allowed to pass on their way. As they depart, the chief will say to them, *'You are in the eye of the Gods, travellers, for you have escaped our curse. Farewell, playthings of destiny.'*

Otherwise, the barbarians will bring food and drink. As the sun is setting the barbarian leader will recite a tale.

'As the sun sinks into the earth we remember our ancestors and how they told of a tribe who crossed the path of wizard.'

'Wataash was the mightiest of barbarian kings. In his glory, he desired to be like the gods, immortal. The wizard, Terim Jahern, had discovered the elixir of immortality. Rashly, Wataash tried to steal it.'

'The wizard slew Wataash and his cohorts, but the elixir was spilt in the fight and the sorcerer was mortally wounded. Before he died, he worked dreadful sorcery, bargaining his soul with the Dukes of Hell. "At the price of my soul," he cried, "curse these robbers to wander the world undead, their souls in torment, nameless and forgotten, until time's end! Let them tell their story to all who will listen, and then slay them, so they might not bear it abroad!" It is said this tribe still wanders the earth.'

As the tale ends, the barbarians will draw their weapons to attack. If the characters haven't guessed already, they are sitting with the barbarians of the story. As they are zombies, the barbarians keep on fighting until hacked to pieces (ie 0 HP). They never parry attacks or retreat, and show no fear of magic.

Undead Barbarian

STR 14 CON 13 SIZ 9 INT 11 POW 13 DEX 12 CHA 6 HP 10

Weapon	Attack	Damage
Battle axe	48%	1D8+2
Long spear	48%	1D10+1
Sea axe	48%	2D6+2

Armour: 1D8-1 barbarian

Caravan

In the distance, the adventurers see vultures wheeling overhead. If they decide upon closer investigation, they come across an abandoned caravan - all the personnel are dead. It is obvious from the condition of the bodies that they died in a fight. All the valuables have been looted with the exception of a gold armband (worth 200 LB) bearing the sign of Chaos.



THE SCARLET SHOALS

After five days travel, the PCs will notice lumps of rosy-hued rock jutting out of the ground. A *See* roll will reveal a pinkish rocky outcrop in the distance. The outcrop leads to a deep gorge with a floor of reddish sand. After about half a mile, the gorge dwindles into the plains of the Scarlet Shoals. Dominating the horizon ahead is the Castle of Lost Souls. It can be seen for miles around, and is the only visible landmark (see map).

As soon as the characters enter the Scarlet Shoals they will come to Ziamora's attention. If she has not sent Clakars against them by then she will instantly do so. If the party have already suffered an attack by the Clakars, Ziamora will prepare her defences at the Castle. The adventurers will have no difficulty crossing the Shoals

THE CASTLE OF LOST SOULS

The tower is thousands of years old. Exactly who built it is lost in the mists of time. It stands 90 metres tall. The tower looks carved from a single piece of blue-grey rock. In fact it is made from the souls of dead men bound together by eldritch wizardry.

The tower has a single door, 5 metres wide and nine times as high. If any characters approach within 30 metres of the door they will summon the tower's Guardian.

THE GUARDIAN

As soon as any character, Elemental or Demon, comes within 30 metres of the door, the ground will shake as if struck by an earthquake. Characters must roll DEXx5 or under, or be thrown to the ground. Out of the sand a huge cerise dome appears. This becomes a head, and then a naked giant, who towers over the characters.

'Who dares awaken Ramukanh'sirk, Servant of Hell?' If the adventurers give no response, they will be called puny mortals and have jokes made at their expense. Ramukanh'sirk (pronounced *ram-UKAN-hazerk*) is 10 metres tall. He looks like a garish pink human, is made of living marble and blocks the doorway. He will issue this warning to the characters:



'If you seek to enter without my master's name I must resist you.' He will then offer help in the form of a riddle. *'Who bakes bread with a heart of dust, a hand of death?'* The answer is Chardhros the Reaper. If the PCs ask the amulet, it must roll its POW or less to know. If questioned about Ramukanh'sirk, it knows the following.

Ramukanh'sirk has a warpact against all weapons while touching the ground.
 Ramukanh'sirk is a Greater Demon.
 He is vulnerable to water.
 His height and physical composition.

If any character names Chardhros as the Demon's master, they will all be allowed to pass. If they try and pass anyway, they must fight Ramukanh'sirk.

Ramukanh'sirk, Greater Guardian Demon

STR 35 CON 80 SIZ 125 INT 16 POW 60 DEX 9 CHA 26 HP 193

Weapon	Attack	Damage
Punch	75%	1D3+3D6
Kick	75%	1D6+3D6

Armour: 40-pt skin*Special Abilities:* Warpact

The Demon's attacks count as magical. If Ramukanh'sirk scores a critical, he has squashed his target. This unfortunate person has been squashed to a pulp and is dead.

The Demon has a warpact against all weapons, including those with bound Demons, while he is in contact with the ground. Anyone striking him while he touches the ground receives a shock and is thrown to the ground taking 2D8 damage. The weapon is destroyed (magic weapons survive if they roll their POW or under and merely lose their enchantment). If he is somehow lifted, he may be damaged. A number of gnomes (Earth Elementals) could do it.

Ramukanh'sirk's bane is water. A single drop touching his skin will reduce him to a pile of sand about the size of a small dune.

Kind gamemasters may allow characters one chance to slip past the Guardian. If a character rolls his DEX or less, he has nimbly dodged the giant. If he fails, he is squashed and his soul plucked up by Chardhros to be tortured for eternity. Successfully passing the giant will destroy it.

THE TOWER

The tower is magical and cannot be harmed except by the most powerful beings. Its walls are 3 metres thick at the base, tapering to 1 metre at the apex. The walls are carved into the likeness of a myriad of figures writhing in agony, actually faces of the souls the tower is built from.

It is possible to scale the tower and enter through the third floor balcony. This requires a Critical Climb roll as the walls are quite smooth. The tower can also be entered by air or magically, but cannot be tunnelled into. A Demon of Teleportation will convey the adventurers unobstructed. A Demon of Desire could create a human-size gap by expending 4D8CON.

The interior is dim. Little sunlight seeps in through the few windows. In every hall braziers burn with an eerie green flame that barely lessens the gloom. Sweet-smelling herbs fill the air and deaden the senses to the world outside. Without conscious effort nothing that happens outside will be noticed - save the end of the world.

1. Ground Floor. The whole of the ground floor is taken up by a plain blue-grey hall, 80 metres high. A narrow staircase rises up into the heights of the tower, spiralling precariously round the inner wall. After a heart-stopping climb, the stairs lead onto the first floor.

2. First Floor. This is identical to the ground-floor hall, except of more modest dimensions. The ceiling is only 3 metres high. On the wall are twenty-four pairs of manacles, some still binding the corpses of long-forgotten prisoners. If touched, the corpses will crumble to dust.

3. Second Floor. A sumptuous lounge, expensively appointed, the air scented by incense. Ziamora has adopted this as her living quarters. There are several notable features.

A: Demon Bed. This ornate four-poster, besides guaranteeing a perfect sleep, is a Demon of Knowledge. By sleeping on the bed, a character has a POW x3% chance of finding the answer to a question hitherto unanswerable, in the form of a dream.

B: Demon Table. This baroque dining table is covered with a delicious feast of the most exotic food and drink. It is self-replenishing, and produces whatever the consumer desires. Both this and the bed only work in the tower, and become mundane if somehow removed.

C: Demon Statue. Carved from solid jade in the likeness of a wild-eyed dancing youth. This is Tamalan, a Demon of Possession under Ziamora's control.

D: Salt Clakar. This was once alive, but was turned to salt for irritating Ziamora. Any character captured by Clakars earlier will be here beside it, also turned to salt.

E: Lacquered Box. This box is opened safely by pressing a secret stud. This needs a *See* and a *Search* roll to find. A character lifting the lid without having first pressed the stud must roll DEX as a percentage or get hit by a pin coated with Type 5 poison. Inside are 6 Glass Fingers (see Ziamora's description for full details).

The space under the mezzanine is divided into rooms by heavy tapestries. They are well appointed, once serving as bedrooms. The one marked X holds Dhberac's children.

4. Mezzanine. This is a library. The walls are lined with rare and valuable tomes which crumble to dust as soon as they are opened. This floor forms a balcony to 3. Rooms 3 and 4 together are 3 metres high, the mezzanine being half-way between floor and ceiling.

5. Third Floor. This serves as a stable for Ziamora's Demon of Transport, Quolalola. There is a large arched window with a balcony through which it can come and go.

THE SITUATION

Ziamora has adopted the tower as her base in the Young Kingdoms. She is seeking the necessary items to release her race from a ten thousand year slumber. Having located the Key of Mirikos, she arranged for it to be stolen by hand, since it was well-guarded against sorcery. She is not interested in Dhberac's children and considers them expendable. Ziamora keeps the Key on her at all times. Obviously, she expected Dhberac to try to regain the Key, and has taken several precautions. As usual with humans, she has underestimated his ingenuity.

Ziamora is aware the tower has a Guardian. She alighted by air, thus avoiding the conditions which summon it. She also knows what the tower is made of.

The High Priestess will be half-expecting the characters, but assumes the Guardian will deal with them. If she captured one of the party with the Clakars, she will have extracted some information about the rest. She will not notice any uproar outside because of the effect of the herbs. If possible, Ziamora will avoid confrontation, preferring to sweet-talk the characters to her way of thinking. If it comes to a fight, she will have no hesitation in cutting her losses and fleeing with the Key. If by chance the characters have the Key, she will unleash her full sorcerous might to regain it.

THE CHILDREN

Dhberac's children, Hanamel and Cyrona, are held in one of the small rooms under the library balcony. They have been drugged with a sedative and are unable to stand or walk unaided. They are unharmed.

Characters with *Plant Lore* may try and concoct an antidote to sober them up. If a fumble is rolled, the two potions mix and create a Type 4 poison. When the children wake up, they will be disorientated and, unless convinced of the character's mission, will become hysterical.

The children are twins, aged 16, and have their fathers looks. They are very close to each other and will get upset if separated. They are unarmed and lightly clothed.



Hanamel, Dhberac's son

STR 10 CON 12 SIZ 11 INT 14 POW 12 DEX 10 CHA 14

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Broadsword	20%	1D8+1	20%
Dagger	10%	1D4+2	10%

Cyroma, Dhberac's daughter

STR 8 CON 12 SIZ 11 INT 14 POW 12 DEX 10 CHA 14

No effective attacks

THE KEY OF MIRIKOS

The Key is an ancient artifact, fabricated by Balo at the dawn of time. In the right hands it has great power. The right hands now happen to be Ziamora's and she guards the Key with her life. The Key's only known powers are to open any lock. She believes that it will also release her god, Amma-y-Graan, from his living tomb when combined with the right ritual incantations. It is made of gold and set with pearls (a collector might pay 5000 LB). The Key is about 15 cms long.

The Key and the children are warded from scrying by a Spirit Ward. The Spirit Ward is not actually manifest on the world-plane but drives off prying Demons of Knowledge and Desire on the shadow plane. For game purposes the Demon has a POW of 38 if characters insist their own Demons fight it.

Inside the tower, however, the Spirit Ward is useless. Adventurers may freely use Demons of Knowledge to divine information or Demons of Desire to get their hands on the Key or children.

**ZIAMORA**

Ziamora is the last noblewoman of the Essegraani, a race that exists on a plane of Chaos, cursed by a magical slumber. She is tall, fair-skinned with close-cropped black hair. She treats all non-Essegraani as expendable servants. She would also prefer that someone else did her dirty work while she relaxed in the lap of luxury. Like all Essegraani, whatever she does she manages to do it aesthetically. The characters should have ample evidence that she is a peerless sorceress who could snuff them out like a candle.

Ziamora is the major adversary throughout these three adventures, featuring indirectly in the events of *Ruins In Madness* and directly in *Empress on the Emerald Shore*. Ideally, she should escape alive.

When the adventurers arrive in the tower, roll 1D8 and consult the table below to determine her location.

D8	Location
1	The lounge: on the Demon bed.
2-3	Examining the library
4-5	Summoning a Demon in room 3 (roll 1D8: 1-3 Knowledge, 4-6 Desire, 7-8 Combat)
6	Away on Quolalola; absent for 4D10 minutes
7-8	With the children in the side room

Ziamora, last Queen of the Essegraani and High Priestess

STR 13 CON 16 SIZ 16 INT 21 POW 29 DEX 15 CHA 18 HP 20 ELAN 97

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Dagger	60%	1D4+2+5D6	47%

Armour: 60 Demon armour

Skills: Balance 61%, Climb 27%, Conceal 60%, Credit 57%, Dodge 45%, Evaluate Treasure 74%, First Aid 79%, Hide 38%, Jump 27%, Listen 56%, Make Map 59% Memorise 100% Move Quietly 48%, Music Lore 49%, Orate 62%, Persuade 57%, Plant Lore 89%, Poison Lore 105%, Ride 37%, Search 41%, See 39%

Languages: Common: Speak 100%, R/W 100%; Low Melnibonean: Speak 98%, R/W 93%; High Melnibonean: Speak 79%, R/W 64%; Essegraani: Speak 100%, R/W 100%; pande: Speak 37%; Madben: Speak 59%, R/W 46%; Yuric: Speak 32%

Summonings: Elementals: Air 91%, Earth 96%, Fire 94%, Water 97%. Demons: Combat 96%, Desire 97%, Knowledge 98%, Possession 92%, Protection 95%, Travel 93%; Other Summonings: Amma-y-Graan, Lassa, Straasha, Grome, Kakatal

ZIAMORA'S DEMONS**Demon of Protection**

CON 76 SIZ 16 POW 20 CHA 16

This Demon has the form of a stunning red silk robe emblazoned with the Chaos sign in silver.

Quolalola, Demon of Transport

STR 27 CON 32 SIZ 34 INT 5 POW 11 DEX 13 CHA 6 HP 54

Quolalola is a giant seven-headed swan. It is bound to the gold amulet it wears around its left leg.

Seepreest, Demon of Desire

STR 7 CON 43 SIZ 7 INT 12 POW 9 DEX 9 CHA 20 HP 38

Seepreest appears as a slight elfin youth with strange shaped feet. Like all servants, Ziamora considers him expendable. He is bound to a ruby bracelet on Ziamora's right wrist.

Gjasajaguj, Demon of Combat

STR 20 CON 12 SIZ 36 INT 8 POW 9 DEX 14 CHA 1 HP 36

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Claw x 2	35%	4D6	35%
Bite	42%	3D8	
Tail bash	30%	2D6	

Armour: 20 point hide

Gjasajaguj is an oily black hound with glowing eyes and a mace-like tail. The demon is normally immaterial and bound to a necklace worn by its mistress.

GLASS FINGERS

These are an assassin's weapon. They require exceptional skill to make, and are extremely rare in the Young Kingdoms. Glass Fingers consist of hollow blades of ice the size of daggers. Inside is a liquid, usually poison, but it may be also be an acid or potion. When an opponent is stabbed with a Glass Finger, the tip breaks off and the victim is subject to the poison. On a critical hit, this is automatic. Otherwise, a successful attack means there is a 40% chance of the poison having effect. Glass Fingers shatter easily, and are useless for parrying or throwing. In sunlight, they melt slowly over a period of 1D6 hours, leaving no trace of the weapon.



In her lounge Ziamora has six Glass Fingers, three filled with Type 1 poison, two with Type 5 and one with Type 3. They are kept in the lacquered box (see above).

RUNNING THE ENCOUNTER

Depending on how the characters react, the encounter can proceed in several ways.

In the event that the characters barge in with swords drawn, Ziamora will try persuading them to put their weapons away and accept her hospitality. She says she has no quarrel with them. Ziamora will spin a web of soothing words and lull the characters into a sense of security. If the adventurers co-operate, she will assist them where possible, even turning over Dhberac's children, explaining how she rescued them from bandits.

If the adventurers opt to attack, Ziamora will flee with the Key. She will not go without leaving a parting present, either unleashing Tamalan, the Dancing Demon or summoning her Demon of Combat.

If the characters keep mentioning Dhberac, Ziamora will attempt to persuade them he is an evil man, intent on sending them to their doom for the sake of it. She will say the children are not his at all, and that he keeps them drugged. If need be, she will summon a Demon of Knowledge and question it in a way that shows Dhberac in a bad light ('Is it true that Dhberac is the bedfellow of Demons?') Ideally, she will try to convince the adventurers that it is in their best interest to return and have vengeance on Dhberac for sending them on a wild goose chase.

Characters who show intelligence and behave courteously may temporarily bring out her better nature. She will grace them with her story, offer them refreshment and answer their questions. Ultimately though, she is treacherous, and will make sure she comes out with the upper hand.

The characters might arrive ready for battle, succumb to her silver tongue, then plan subterfuge, only to provoke Ziamora's wrath and

suffer the consequences. Or they might arrive in good will, discover their salted comrade and plot revenge, at the same time enjoying the fruits of the castle. Whatever happens, the gamemaster should bear in mind that Ziamora has one over-riding purpose - to revive her fellow Essegraani and their god. Humans may amuse her for a while, but ultimately they are expendable. If she finds them inconvenient, she will destroy them.

If a character somehow obtains the Key, all Ziamora need do is expend a Demon of Desire to conjure it back again, although her sense of artistry is likely to make her try something more dramatic first.

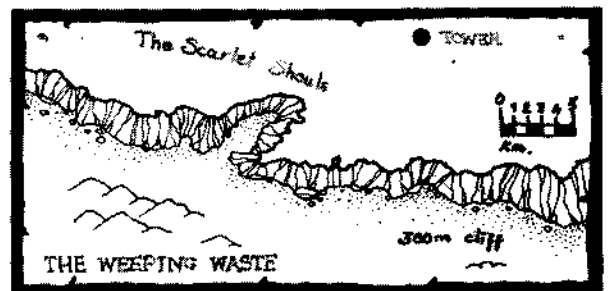
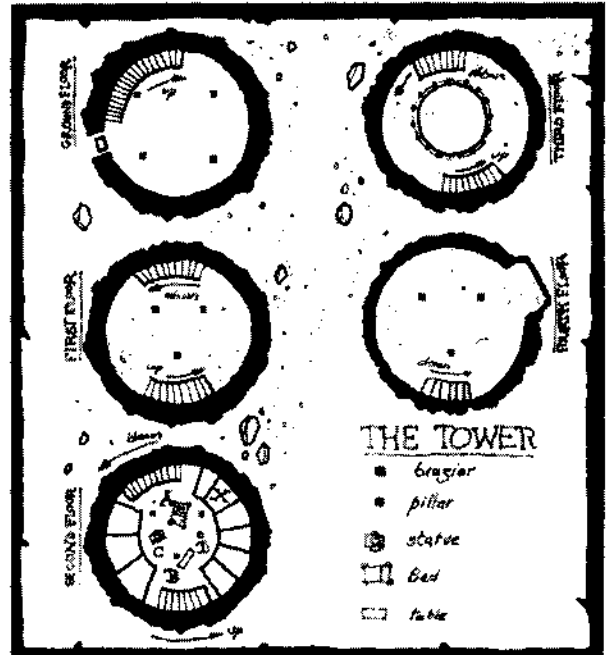
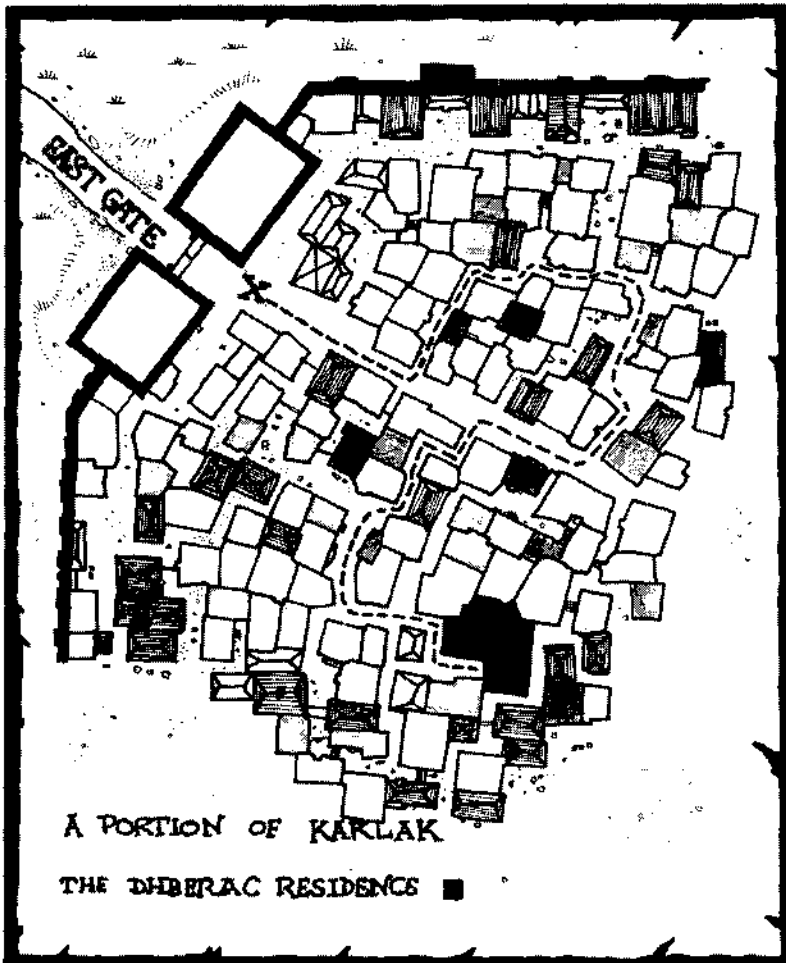
CONCLUSION

The most likely outcome is the characters will settle for the children and leave without the Key rather than die at the hands of Ziamora. Although the following will still hold, minor adjustments may be needed if the resolution was different.

Darsu Dhberac will keep his word and pay each character his weight in Small Silver. There are about 100 coins per kilogram, so each will have a small fortune. The fee will be packed as requested. If the adventurers have let slip the nature of their mission and Dhberac has found out, he will only pay them one tenth of the agreed fee; they have broken the terms of the contract and are lucky to get what they're given. He will let them keep the amulet.

He does not overly care for his offspring, and will show little distress if they're dead, but he will use this as an excuse to reduce payment. Likewise, if the characters return only one of his children, or return empty-handed but with evidence of their demise, he will make a reduced payment.

The ending to this adventure is not clear-cut because it leads on to the next two adventures. Forces have been set in motion that have been waiting since the dawn of time. The characters have been woven into a web of hellish comedy spun by the whim of Chaos. Gamemasters who are using this adventure apart from the rest may like to alter matters to provide a more conclusive ending.



THE MADCAP LAUGHS

STORMBRINGER ADVENTURE RUINS IN MADNESS

By Matt Williams

GM'S INTRODUCTION

This adventure is a sequel to *A Heart of Dust*, *A Hand of Death* featured in *White Dwarf* 96. A guide to the overall structure of the campaign, *The Madcap Laughs* was presented in WD95. However, with minor modifications, the adventure that follows may be played apart from the campaign as long as the adventuring party number between three and six characters (one of whom should be a sorcerer).

The adventure can begin at any time once yourself and your players feel satisfied with the conclusion of *A Heart of Dust*. The loose ends left by that adventure may be ignored for the moment, and the party's attention can be drawn away from the matter of the Key of Mirikos, and Ziamora and her demons.

One such distraction may occur when the characters hear word that an anonymous wizard seeks to hire adventurers to fetch a valuable book from somewhere in the southern jungles. It doesn't matter how the PCs come by this information (as long as it's second hand). Nor does it matter whether the group decide to pursue the matter. If they don't, and they have little reason to, allow them to become involved in any matter that interests them but keep having them encounter this snippet of information, as if it's the latest news, until one or more of the party takes some interest.

Should any members of the party try to investigate the matter, they will be able to uncover no further details. Once they concern themselves with the rumour (if only on a speculative basis), on their retirement for the evening, all the characters will experience the same dream.

THE DREAM

Read the following passage to the adventurers:

You are on a sailing ship, journeying across a calm sea. It is a warm, moonless night. Around you stand a number of others dressed for war, their features invisible in the dark.

As the sun's first rays light the horizon, a tall, cloaked figure calls, 'It is time!' As he chants strange incantations, the sea begins to swell. Dark clouds gather and rain streaks down from the sky. The rising sun is blotted out by the storm. The ship rocks and sways violently and is suddenly caught on a huge wave. With supernatural force, the fragile vessel is swept across the sea. In the swell and foam you see faces forming. It's as if the ship were being tossed like a plaything from one to another of the ocean's children. They laugh and smile, pushing the ship forward at a manic speed.

Through the spray ahead looms a grey line of rocks. There is no checking of the terrible momentum. You realise the ship will be wrecked on the shore and watch, terrified but helpless. The battered vessel hurtles on, the waves grow higher. Suddenly, the ship shudders. You hear the sound of splintering wood. The main mast snaps, and water floods the deck. As the ship capsizes you feel yourself gasping for air, surrounded by the laughing denizens of the ocean.

The adventurers awake fully dressed, their clothes soaked. They find themselves on a beach. None of them have been harmed but they may be understandably confused about their whereabouts.

They have been abducted to the shores of Oin and Yu by Ylastraa Taar, a Pan Tangian sorcerer. They were summoned to his ship by a Demon and the ship was conveyed to Oin by undines. The journey has taken longer than the dream suggested, and was far less dramatic - though the ship was wrecked and the crew drowned. Should the characters decide to search the beach, they may, at the GM's option, discover crewmen's bodies, washed ashore along with themselves. However, they will learn nothing from these.

When the PCs have satisfied themselves that there is nothing of interest on the beach and turn their attention to moving inland, they will see a figure watching them from a grassy bluff about twenty feet away. The figure is tall, thin and dressed in a dark cowl'd robe. His back is badly hunched over. He beckons the adventurers with an outstretched arm.

Ylastraa Taar is the sorcerer in question. He greets the party warmly, but his gaze seems to be attracted more towards the sea, his face showing a mixture of regret and bemusement. Shrugging his hunched shoulders, he turns to the PCs and begins to explain the reason for their untimely (and uncomfortable) abduction.

'I seek the Whispering Codex of Pyaray for my researches. The nature of Law and Chaos poses many questions, many unfathomable puzzles. But we have a duty to try and change the situation, do we not? We must try to understand. Now my researches lead me to believe that the Codex may have some relevance here.' His crooked face meets the gazes of the adventurers. 'Perhaps you can already see my problem. I am no adventurer.'

He turns away, hobbling inland through the tall grass. Without turning around, he shouts, 'There are riches where it is hidden. Great riches. They're yours whether you uncover the Codex for me or not. What would I spend them on here, eh?'

In fact, Taar is in the pay of Ziamora, who wishes to obtain the Codex because she thinks it contains the rituals needed to release her god, Amma-y-Graan from imprisonment (see WD95).

Taar will not compel the characters to assist him in the search. Instead he will tempt them with his graphic tales of rare Lormyrian treasures. He will show them examples, his two rings. He will tell the characters they can have any loot they discover, besides the Codex. However, should this not be incentive enough, he is prepared to simply leave them to wander round the wilderness of Lormyr with no idea of where they are.

If the characters accept, Taar plans to accompany the party. If they insist, he will let them go alone, giving them his map and arranging to rendezvous back at the shore. He will follow the adventurers at a safe distance, using his scrying device (see below) to keep an eye on them.

YLASTRAA TAAR



Ylastraa Taar is a sorcerer of Pan Tang. He has a tall and wiry build deformed by a hunchback, and tends to speak in a whisper. His deformity has led him to despise the physical prowess of other mortals. He seeks to best others via scholarship and sorcery. Years of study have indeed made him a powerful sorcerer.

Ziamora has promised him a share of her sorcerous knowledge and a place at her right hand when the Essegraani control the universe. He keeps in contact with her by using a scrying device described below. He is physically weak, and unable to fight. He needs the muscle-power of a few adventurers to help him find the Codex.

Ylastraa Taar, Pan Tangian Sorcerer
STR 6 CON 5 SIZ 20 INT 22 POW 19
DEX 11 CHA 10 HP 13

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Dagger	30%	1D4+2	05%

Armour: 76-point Demon armour

Skills: Conceal 45%, Evaluate Treasure 89%, First Aid 100%, Hide 22%, Listen 45%, Music Lore 45%, Make Map 66%, Memorise 82%, Persuade 58%, Taste 53%

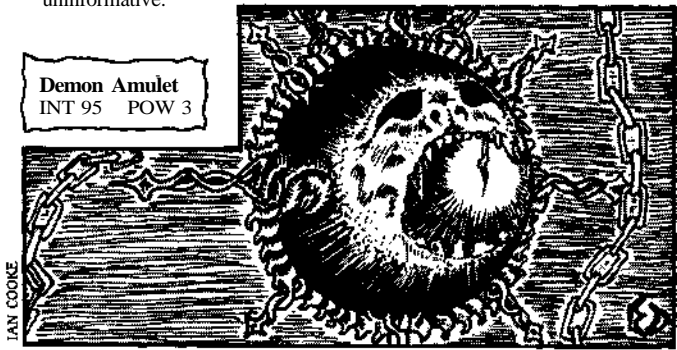
Languages: Common: Speak 100%, R/W 100%; Low Melnibonean: Speak 95%, R/W 95%; High Melnibonean: Speak 95%, R/W 95%; Mabden: Speak 95%, R/W 95%; Orjenn: Speak 75%, R/W 75%; Yurie: Speak 64%

SUMMONINGS: Elementals: Water 98%, Air 77%, Earth 54%; Demons: Combat 97%, Desire 78%, Protection 59%; Other Summonings: Straasha.

Even though he is SIZ 20, Taar is thin and slight, so has no damage bonus. He carries a dagger, but prefers to rely on sorcery.

Taar wears two very valuable Lormyrian rings. One is made of hand-worked gold, set with a giant 200 carat ruby (worth 20,000 LB); the other is made of fine-wrought silver set with a dragon carved from a single huge opal (worth 8,000 LB). Stealing them will bring attack from a Demon of Combat, to whom the thief's souls are pre-dedicated. The rings are binding objects. The silver ring contains a bound undine. The gold ring acts as a binding object for a Demon of Combat, as noted below.

Taar also wears a spherical crystal pendant, which allows him to communicate with Ziamora and see other people and places at a distance. The pendant embodies a Demon of Knowledge with the special ability of Scrying. The Demon only presents its knowledge in this way. Its scrying ability is accurate, but the demon is otherwise uninformative.



Demon Amulet
INT 95 POW 3

TAAR'S DEMONS

Etsurt, Demon of Protection
CON 76 SIZ 20 POW 12

Special Abilities: Despair

The Demon exists in the form of Taar's cowed, full-length cloak. Looking at its velvet-black surface, one can make out the pattern of the stars and the depths of space between them. Any creature intending to attack Taar must roll POW or less as a percentage or catch a glimpse of the robe. A character who fails a POW v POW struggle with the Demon will stare into the wastes of infinity and be filled with despair. Until the Demon moves more than 100 metres away, the character will be unable to do anything except weep. At night, the Demon's power is at its height; its POW is effectively doubled for POW v POW struggles.

Aborsch, Demon of Combat
STR 15 CON 15 SIZ 27 INT 1 POW 9 DEX 18 CHA 1 HP 15

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Bite x 3	33%	1D10	33%

Armour: None

Special Abilities: Regeneration

Summoning Aborsch brings forth a plague of creeping, biting insects which swarm over their victim. The swarm will have three group bites

per round, and armour is ignored - the insects crawl through the joints. The insects can be damaged by beating, fire etc, or washed off in water (the Demon loses 1D6 Hit Points per round). More insects join the swarm each combat round, represented by Regeneration. If the demon is reduced to 0 or fewer Hits for one whole round, it is considered slain (ie the insects are removed). The Demon can cover as many victims as it has SIZ. For example, it could swarm over two SIZ 11 people with some to spare. It is bound to the ruby ring, and is noticeable as a variety of insects crawling across the ground.

THE WHISPERING CODEX

The Whispering Codex is said to contain eight thousand impossible riddles - and their answers. It once belonged to the priests of Pyaray, but was somehow lost to the Church of Straasha. To prevent its secrets being revealed, Pyaray's servants had bound certain Demons to destroy anyone or anything who revealed its whereabouts. Thus, the book was lost in Lormyr, its location known only to one man.

Reading the Codex is itself a hazardous business. Any reader who fails to roll POW or under as a percentage is driven mad by its tortuous contradictions and horrible secrets. Any creature revealing the Codex's location to another is immediately devoured by a horde of Demons.

The book is old and heavy, as long as a man's arm and half as wide. It is bound in octopus skin and smells like an open grave. Each page is made from the flayed skin of drowned mariners whose lifeless forms now man the Chaos fleet of Pyaray.

Theoretically, any sorcerer can benefit from reading the Codex. First, the wizard must successfully make a POW roll to avoid being driven mad as noted above. After studying the book for 30-INT weeks, the adventurer must roll twice their INT+POW or less as a percentage, and - if successful - gain 1D4-1 INT. The sorcerer may proceed to the next rank of sorcery. Characters of the fifth rank will now be able to try and summon Pyaray. Failure means the adventurer's POW drops to 1. This regenerates at 1 point/game hour, but stops when the value has recovered all but one of the points originally lost. This last point is permanently lost.

THE JUNGLES OF OIN AND YU

The jungle-lands of the southern continent are lush and full of wildlife. Tigers hunt among the overgrown ruins of once-proud Lormyrian cities. Snakes bask in the sun on beds of forgotten treasure. The forests are old, with towering moss-covered trees of enormous girth, and thick intertwining undergrowth makes progress on foot difficult. Much of the interior of Lormyr has been reclaimed by such wilderness. Oin and Yu were once provinces of the Lormyrian Empire, but - as this nation declined - they fell to the anarchic hands of the barbarian tribesmen.

TRAVEL TO THE RUINED CITY

Taar has a map showing the whereabouts of the last man alive who knows the location of the Codex. The man is now a hermit. He lives in a ruined city at the edge of the jungle. The journey is not too hard, and the characters will reach the city in three days.



Each day, Taar will find the opportunity to slip away for about an hour, on the pretence that he wishes to meditate alone. If they follow him, the adventurers will see him apparently talking to himself. In fact, he is communicating with Ziamora using the crystal pendant. If the characters have tussled with Ziamora and take no trouble to conceal their true identities, she will instruct Taar to arrange a sticky end for them. How this is handled is a matter for the GM's discretion. Ziamora will not reveal her involvement in the quest to the adventurers whether they have crossed her or not.

A character making a *Listen* roll will overhear choice fragments of the conversation, just enough to give an outline of Taar's true intentions. As a result, the characters may well choose to slay him. In this case, Ziamora will choose a new agent. This will be either Torvlim Nosam or Ellshara (see below). The new agent may not know for whom he or she is working, but Ziamora will arrange for the new agent to deliver the Codex into her hands. If the gamemaster has a taste for subtle irony, the adventurers themselves might become Ziamora's new pawns.

ARRIVAL

The expedition will arrive at its destination at dusk. The sun has fallen behind the high cliff. The whole ruined city is in shadow, the tallest buildings edged in brilliant orange light. The city is on the verge of reverting to wilderness.

If the characters decide to press on and search for the hermit immediately, they automatically have an encounter from the Pasdunzoon Encounter list. Encounter frequency should be no higher than one every two hours. Otherwise, as they look around for a campsite, they come across Torvlim Nosam's pavilion.

THE RUINED CITY - PASDUNZOON

Once a jewel in Lormyr's crown, this has long since fallen into decay, since the last inhabitants died hundreds of years ago. The city still looks majestic, even in ruins. Many of the buildings still stand - just. The forest slowly encroaches on the ruined streets. Roots and creepers force their way through the floor of elegant squares. Trees take seed in walls. Wild beasts make their lairs in crumbled mansions.

The city is cradled between low hills on the shores of the Lake of Tears. At the western tip of the lake, the land rises sharply into a cliff over which cascade a score of waterfalls. Hollowed into the cliffs are ancient barbarian cave-dwellings. Where the city starts, the forest ends and the land becomes more steppe-like.

BUILDING TYPES AND STRENGTHS

Since the adventurers may want to explore the ruined city, use the following table to find out what sort of building they are entering:



Roll 1D100
01-30
31-45
46-55
56-65
66-75
76-85
86-95
96-100

Building
Two-storey residence
Three-storey residence
Large mansion
Covered square
Granary
Public building; eg lawcourts, baths
Temple
Mausoleum

None of these structures are particularly safe, they are all prone to subsidence and collapse. To find the condition of a building, roll 1D100. This is the percentage chance of the structure collapsing if entered. Check once on entry and every time an adventurer tampers with the masonry or contents. If a building collapses, adventurers nearby must make a *Jump* or *Dodge* roll to avoid falling masonry. Those inside must roll their DEX x 2% or under to succeed. Characters who fail to clear the falling stonework take 6D6 points of damage.

If the roll to find out if the building collapses is 10 or less, the floor has subsided instead. The effect is exactly the same, but adventurers inside are trapped in a pit 2D6 metres deep under the rubble, taking falling damage as described on page 48 of the rules book. A character who has not broken limbs may attempt to roll STR or lower as a percentage once per round, to determine whether or not unaided escape is possible. Otherwise, characters may be helped from a pit in sixty minutes (minus ten for each PC helping to clear the rubble).

MAP OF PASDUNZOON

Map Key

A. Temple of Arkyn. This is identified by the stone statue of Arkyn outside. The interior of the temple has completely collapsed, despite the fact that from the outside it looks as if the ravages of time have had no effect at all. Nevertheless, the floors and roof have fallen in. The resulting rubble is now home to ghekoes and lizards. A careful *Search* will unearth a plain looking dagger. As the dagger is picked up, a lump of masonry will fall from the wall. The first adventurer taking the dagger must roll under POWx2%, or take 5D6 damage from the falling stone. This building will not otherwise collapse.

The dagger is Virtuous. Besides the usual abilities, it glows yellow when in the presence of someone lying.

B. Bath-house. This is extremely overgrown with briars and vines and the original roof has been replaced by a canopy of foliage. On entering the building, anyone making a *Listen* roll will make out a faint repeated hissing. This comes from a side bathing room - the source, hundreds of snakes. The 3 metre by 5 metre pool is filled with 800-1,000 snakes, ranging from poisonous asps to large constrictors. Anyone wading in has a 50% chance of being bitten by a poisonous serpent each round. The room is completely dark so adventurers striding in without caution may fall into the pool.

A *See* roll will reveal a strangely armoured skeleton lying under the snakes. In fact, the skeleton is not armoured, but wears a special suit which allows the wearer to breathe underwater for up to 6 hours. The suit is made of rivetted leather, with a helmet fashioned out of a giant snail shell. Tubes lead from this to a pear-shaped copper container. The apparatus is very bulky on land, requiring 16 STR to move freely. Underwater, the effect on movement is negated. If used as armour, it works as a superior form of leather, absorbing 1D6+1 points of damage. The copper container, which holds the air supply, will have 1D6 hours worth of air in it.

Disposing of the snakes requires an imaginative strategy. Physically lifting them out is time-consuming and dangerous. It will take 1D4+2 hours to remove them all. The gamemaster should check as above to see if an adventurer has been bitten. They could be driven out by fire, or they could be drowned. The GM should favour imaginative and well thought out schemes to determine the success of the operation.

C. Webbed House. This two-storey residence is covered inside with a huge blanket of spider webs. The spiders seem harmless enough, being about 2-3 cm across. A *See* roll will reveal a skeleton with a pouch in the far corner of the entrance hall. The pouch contains gems. It is no trouble to get to the corpse and take the pouch since the webs brush away easily. However, they are coated with a contact poison.



IAN COOKE

Characters entering the building must roll DEX x3% or under every time they move forward to avoid the webs touching their skin. Any adventurer touching them must make a CONx1% roll or fall into a deep sleep after 1D6 hours. The adventurer will wake periodically for 2D6 hours before lapsing into sleep again. After a week, his condition will worsen. Respiration will be short, and he will run a fever. 2D6 days later, the adventurer will die. An antidote for the poison will be commonly available in any cities in the southern continent.

The pouch contains a 20 carat diamond, a 15 carat emerald and 6x10 carat sapphires.

D. Square of Cats. This covered square is filled with dozens of cats. When the adventurers enter this location the felines begin to mew, one after another. In the square is a statue of a nobleman. On his head is lodged a gold coronet (worth 100 LB). Sharing occupation of the square with the cats is Rallup Yar and his companion Meeka.

RALLUP YAR



JES GOODWIN

Rallup Yar is the sole man alive who knows exactly where the Whispering Codex is hidden. He dragged the secret from the spirit of a priest of Law. The priest's spirit was immediately devoured by demons for revealing the secret. At the sight of this Rallup Yar went mad, swore a vow of silence and fled into the Lormyrian wilderness.

He found Meeka abandoned in the forest, and raised her as his daughter. He has never spoken to her, and the only language she knows is Yurie, learned from a traveller who spent several years in Pasdunzoon. Being unaccustomed to human contact has taken its toll on the girl. She often thinks she is another of Rallup Yar's cats.

On the wall is inscribed Rallup Yar's tale in a phonetic transcription of

Yurie. If the adventurers speak Yurie they have a chance equal to one-third of their *Speak Yurie* skill to recognise it as such. The inscription reads as follows.

I, Rallup Yar, last man alive to hold that dreadful secret, live in exile lest I reveal it to another soul and have my heart rent by demons for all eternity. In this crumbling land have I taken refuge from my church, and my lord and master Pyaray, Whisperer of Impossible Secrets, Captain of the Chaos Fleet, Sucker of Drowned Men's Bones, to carry my secret to the grave and the peace of Limbo, having vowed silence until the end of my days. I dare not speak. I will not speak. I cannot speak.

Getting the secret from Rallup Yar depends on the adventurers' ruthlessness and ingenuity. To ensure his silence he has cut his own tongue out. Some possible ways are these.

Persuasion - However hard they try, the adventurers' efforts will prove futile. The consequences of revelation far outweigh any benefit suggested by a bunch of silver-tongued charmers.

Torture - The adventurers may opt to physically torture him, or apply psychological pressure by hurting Meeka or the cats. This will distress the hermit but since he cannot voice the secret he must write it down, which will allow him time to recover and steel his nerve against doing so. Rallup Yar is not above lying, either.

Torture will break Rallup Yar, if the torturer rolls a critical *Torture* roll and the hermit fails to roll his POW x3% or less.

Sorcery - a Demon of Desire can wrest the secret from Rallup Yar, who will then be consumed by a horde of demons for telling. The Demon of Desire must either be cajoled into telling its newly discovered information, or bound and forced to do so. Unbound Demons are loathe to tell; they know they will be destroyed if they do. Bound Demons have no option, but will be annihilated on telling their master the location.

Anyone learning the secret is now in a precarious position. Letting slip, even by accident, precisely where the Codex is, will cause the teller to be slain by Demons. The gamemaster should keep a careful watch on this. Showing someone counts as revealing the secret.

A Demon of Possession can force Rallup Yar to write down the location.

Demons of Knowledge - only a few Demons of Knowledge know where the Codex is. They also know the consequences of divulging this. Only Demons absolutely compelled to serve will tell their summoner the location. A Demon of Knowledge knows the secret on a roll of its POW-10% or less.

In any case the location is always given as a riddle - *Where Straasha's kingdom meets King Grome's, and the eye's river washes stones.* The answer: at the bottom of the Lake of Tears.

Rallup Yar, Ex-Priest of Pyaray

STR 10 CON 9 SIZ 11 INT 15 POW 19 DEX 12 CHA 9 HP 9

No effective attacks

Armour: None

Skills: First Aid 40%, Hide 50%, Listen 39%, Make Map 42%, Memorize 60%, Move Quietly 44%, Plant Lore 63%

Languages: Common: Speak 75%, R/W 75%; Low Melnibonean: Speak 40%, R/W 40%; Yurie: Speak 40%

He doesn't have a tongue, but if given one could speak the languages noted. If he hears the adventurers coming, he and Meeka will hide in the shadows, or a building off the square.

Meeka, Teenage Cat-Girl

STR 9 CON 12 SIZ 6 INT 9 POW 11 DEX 13 CHA 11 HP 6

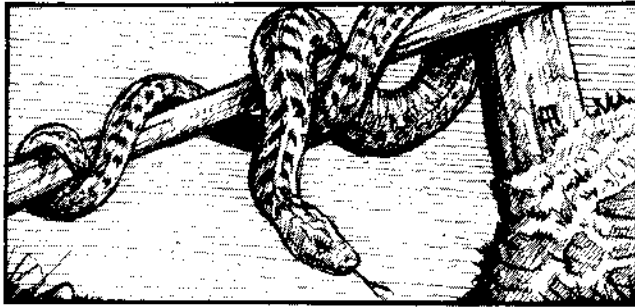
No effective attacks

Skills: Balance 66%, Climb 30%, Dodge 65%, Hide 55%, Jump 30%, Move Quietly 55%, See 41%, Scent 42%, Track 44%, Tumble 45%

Languages: Yurie: Speak 20%

ENCOUNTERS IN PASDUNZOOON

The GM may opt to use encounters from the following list during the PCs' search of the city. Encounters should not be used more than once. The GM should also feel free to modify encounters where necessary and, indeed, to supplement them with new ones.



Constrictor Snake

The adventurers stumble across the lair of a hungry constrictor. The snake will drop on lone or injured characters, or the last person to pass beneath it. Unless characters make a critical See or Listen roll, they will be surprised.

Constrictor	STR 22	CON 16	SIZ 20	INT 7	POW 5	DEX 16	HP 24
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Weapon	Attack	Damage
Bite	40%	1D6
Crush	60%	2D6

Armour: None

Skills: Ambush 60%, Hide 70%, Move Quietly 80%

Once the constrictor has wrapped a character in its coils, there is little hope for their survival unless the serpent is slain quickly. After the first hit with a *Crush*, the snake goes on crushing automatically until its victim dies or it is slain.

Clakars

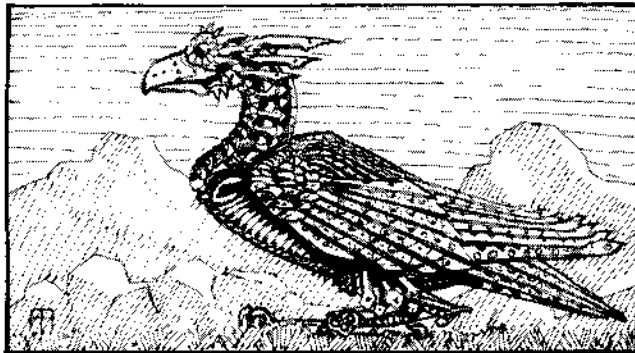
A nearby building is home to a troupe of 2D6 Clakars. If disturbed they will attack the intruders.

Clakars	STR 14	CON 14	SIZ 14	INT 9	POW 14	DEX 14	HP 16
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Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Bite	40%	1D8+2	
Claw x2	60%	2D6	30%
Wing buffet	90%	1D4-1	25%

Armour: None

Skills: Climb 45%, Listen 25%, Scent 25%, Search 25%, Track 25%



Jewelled Bird

Among the ruins the characters find a jewelled, brass bird. It is about man-sized. It is mechanical, and if - somehow - the characters manage to fathom the nature of the mechanism and get it going, it will serve as a mount. It can run at 10 km/h and fly. The bird is Virtuous and will explode on contact with Chaotic artifacts. The gems are semi-precious.

Obelisk

In a square stands a 10 metre marble obelisk. Three sides are inscribed with various languages, the fourth with geometrical symbols. Carved into the flagstones around it is a graduated circle marking the hours of the day.

The top metre has broken off. If it is replaced, the obelisk works as a sundial.

The three languages are the Lormyrian version of common, Low Melnibonean and a phonetic transcription of Yuric. Careful study would allow someone knowing two or three languages a good chance of deciphering the hermit's inscriptions. Characters knowing all three languages have an INT x5% chance of doing so. Familiarity with common or Low Melnibonean and Yuric will give the reader an INT x3% chance.

Baboons

An old temple site has become the temporary home of 4D4 baboons. If the characters wish to search the temple, they must first drive them away. The baboons are intelligent enough to hurl rocks and topple pillars onto the characters.

Baboons	STR 16	CON 11	SIZ 10	INT 5	POW 7	DEX 8	HP 11
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Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Bite	35%	1D8+2	
Claw	40%	1D6+2	30%
Throw rock / Topple masonry	40%		

Armour: 1 point for skin and fur

* Rocks will do 1D6 damage. A toppled pillar will do 2D6, and characters may dodge the falling masonry.



Rusting Engine

Apparently a mangled pile of rusted metal, this was in fact a steam-powered war engine. It is the size of a small house, with broken pistons and wheels sticking out in all directions. There is no way, bar magic, to restore the machine to working order. If somehow the characters do so, it resembles a huge metal ant.



The Poet's Camp

As the characters descend into the valley, they notice a lavishly decked out pavilion on the edge of the lake, and the smell of roasting meat wafts up from the camp. A horse grazes nearby; lamplight spills out through the doorflap; a boar roasts over a fire. Anyone within 10 metres making a See roll will glimpse silk cushions and plates of sweetmeats through a small window in the tent.

The tent is the property of one Torvlim Nosam (WD95). He is concealed nearby and will wait until the characters enter before bursting in on them and reciting one of his verses.

If the characters approve, he will introduce himself and be generous with his hospitality. He will entertain them as only he knows how, with a selection of his dreadful verse. Nosam will offer any information he knows, adding plenty of inaccuracies by way of embellishment. He will tell the characters that he too is looking for the Codex, purely for the challenge. In reality, he seeks the Codex because he thinks it will help him become a sorcerer. (If Taar is dead and Nosam has been chosen as Ziamora's new agent, she will have struck a bargain along these lines: he brings her the book, she makes him a sorcerer.)

Taar will not take kindly to Torvlim Nosam, should he be in the company of the party.

If the characters ask to join his camp, Torvlim Nosam will permit it, and suggest they all exchange stories around the fire. In light of Nosam's quality of verse, the characters may wish to politely refuse. This will throw Nosam into a sulk which lasts all the next day.

TORVLIM NOSAM

A gentleman from Filkar, self-styled poet and sometime adventurer, Torvlim Nosam has built himself quite a reputation for two things: luck, and a terrible way with words. Torvlim appears puny and eccentric, but this is a front concealing his ruthless and logical character. He is a clever schemer, and by appearing unconcerned by anything, he frequently manages to influence events to his advantage.

Torvlim Nosam, Poet and Adventurer
STR 19 CON 7 SIZ 11 INT 15 POW 13 DEX 15 CHA 18 HP 7

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Falchion	42%	1D6+2+1D6	36%
Kick	198%	1D6+1D6	92%



JES GOODWIN

Armour: None

Skills: Climb 25%, Conceal 47%, Credit 62%, Dodge 70%, Evaluate Treasure 18%, Hide 55%, Listen 28%, Move Quietly 36%, Orate 71%, Persuade 26%, Ride 20%, See 43%, Sleight of Hand 62%, Tie/Untie Knot 32%

Languages: Common: Speak 75%, R/W 75%; Low Melniboncan: Speak 40%, R/W 20%

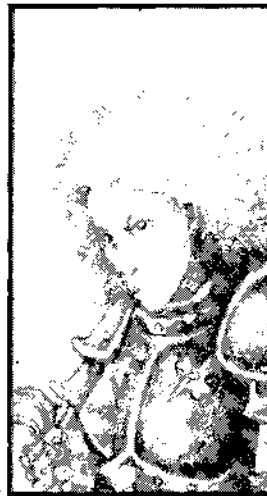
From his thin, waspish frame you could never guess his great strength. His darting grey eyes are concealed beneath the brim of his turquoise hat, a modest touch in his generally gold-stitched apparel. In combat, his preferred tactic involves waving his sword at an enemy, before throwing the weapon away once his adversary gets so near that he might have to fight it. This has saved his life on many occasions.

TorvlimNosam lives a life of extreme luxury, afforded by his inherited fortune. He would rather be up a proverbial creek without a paddle (or canoe!) than have to eat a meal without brandy from a crystal goblet.

Nosam knows a little of the history of the Codex and believes it will bring him sorcerous powers. He knows where the hermit lives, and is familiar with the main thoroughfares of Pasdunzoon. He also knows that Princess Ellshara (see below) is also looking for the Codex.

He will share all this information with the characters if he believes it will help him claim the Codex for himself.

PRINCESS ELLSHARA



JES GOODWIN

The first day the characters go down into the city, they will meet Princess Ellshara. Roll 1D4 for how many hours it is before they meet her. If for some reason they have left the city by then, she will be spotted the same evening on the shore of the lake. If this is so, she will have already found the Virtuous dagger and claimed it as hers. Read the following to the players.

A little way ahead a pack of greyhounds lopes around their houndmaster who holds the reins of two horses. Another figure, armoured in burnished plate, swings into the larger mount's saddle. The armoured figure has obviously noticed you.

'Hail! Disport yourselves properly, for the royal blood of the Kings of Lormyr is ours and we demand your greeting!'

Ellshara is a noblewoman and will expect due respect; rudeness will earn a sharp rebuke. She is searching for the Codex for something to do. Lormyr is sleepy, and there is little to occupy an adventurous princess. This much should reveal the strength of her character.

If Taar is dead, you may decide to make Ellshara Ziamora's new agent. In this case, the two of them will have struck a deal whereby Ziamora has promised to restore the youth of Ellshara's dying father in exchange for the book.

Ellshara's response to the characters depends on how they receive her. If they are hostile, she will be wary and keep herself to herself. If they are warm and courteous, she will be more open. She will not reveal her quest, however.

She knows where the hermit is, and has deciphered his history, but could get no further when he refused to speak. In her armour, she may be mistaken for a man until her helmet is removed. She will take every opportunity to better any man, and idle boasts may be put to the test if Ellshara thinks she can win.

If the characters seem to stand a chance of making Rallup Yar talk, she will help them in any way possible until they find the Codex, when she will try stealing it for herself.

Ellshara will be aware of TorvlimNosam's camp. Unless the characters hid theirs, she may have spotted that too (mate a See roll for her).

Ellshara, Lormyrian Princess

STR 11 CON 14 SIZ 12 INT 13 POW 15 DEX 17 CHA 15 HP 14

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Heavy Mace	96%	1D8+2	92%
Broadsword	56%	1D8+1	64%
Dagger	43%	1D4+2	32%
Self bow	86%	1D8+1	
Melnibonean bow	33%	2D6+1	

Armour: 12 point Virtuous plate with helmet

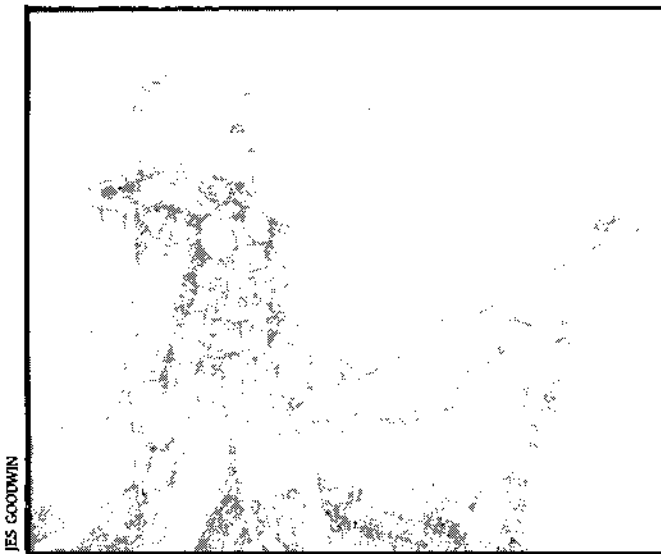
Skills: Credit 48%, Dodge 65%, Evaluate Treasure 28%, First Aid 70%, Hide 42%, Jump 32%, Memorise 33%, Orate 28%, Plant Lore 41%, Ride 63%, See 43%, Swim 40%, Track 28%

Languages: Common: Speak 85%, R/W 85%; Low Melnibonean: Speak 65%, R/W 65%; Yurie: Speak 30%

Ellshara's armour is burnished with gold, an item of rare Lormyrian craftsmanship. The helmet is made to resemble a sun in splendour, with a full-face visor that lifts up.

She is well-educated, knows the ways of the world and seeks respite from the torpid languor of Lormyr. She also delights in besting men, or making them the subject of ridicule, with the exception of her manservant, Kajan.

Her mount is a grey warhorse, a gift from her father, of whom she is very fond. She travels with a pack of 15 long-haired hunting greyhounds, under control of her houndmaster.



Kajan, Lormyrian Houndmaster

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 9 INT 11 POW 9 DEX 15 CHA 10 HP 14

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Spear	36%	1D6+1	50%
Shortsword	30%	1D6+1	30%
Tower shield	40%	1D6+2	65%

Armour: 1D6-1 leather

Skills: Balance 30%, Dog Handling 92%, First Aid 60%, **Skills: Balance 30%, Dog Handling 92%, First Aid 60%. Tie/Untie Knot** Tie/Untie Knot 46%, See 30%, Track 44%, Ride 55%

Languages: Common: Speak 80%, R/W 50%; Low Melnibonean: Speak 55%

Kajan is Ellshara's manservant, shield-bearer and houndmaster. He is also her constant companion on adventures, being secretly charged by her father to protect her from danger. The greyhounds are trained to attack on command, but they are used mostly for hunting game. Kajan hand-reared each one, and will be outraged if they are killed.

THE LAKE OF TEARS

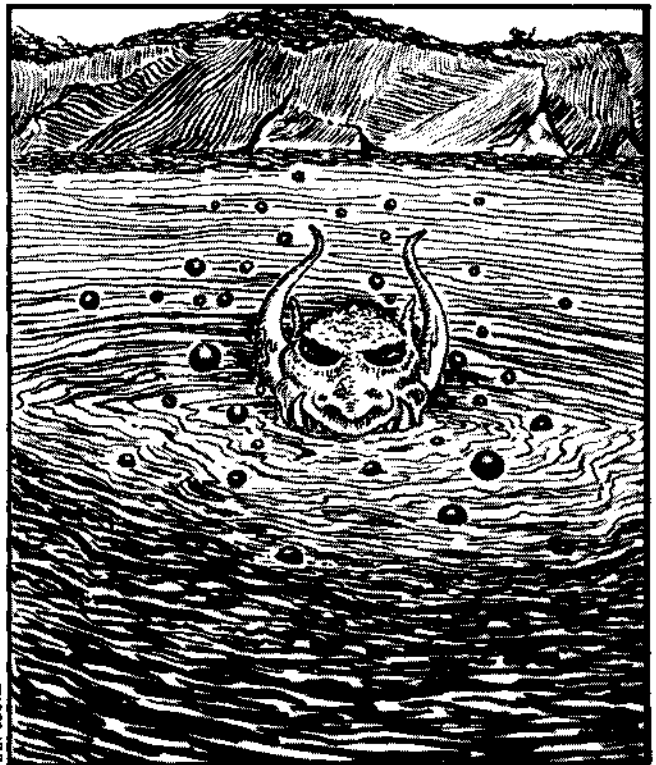
The lake is about 900 metres long, 400 wide, and roughly kidney-shaped. It is no deeper than 15 metres. The shores are gently-sloping shingle beaches, save the western end which runs right up to the cliff. Its waters are dark and gloomy.

At the bottom of the lake is an underground grotto dedicated to Straasha. Here lies the Whispering Codex. The grotto is not hard to find, needing a simple *Search* roll while underwater, but adventurers removing the Codex will immediately draw the attention of Straasha. If he has some special reason - because the adventurer is an Agent or priest of Kakatal for example - the adventurers will be surrounded and attacked by 2D4 water Elementals. Characters able to summon Straasha will be brought to him to explain why they are taking the Codex. If he is convinced of their integrity, he will return them to the lake shore intact with the book. Other adventurers have a POW+ELAN+30% chance of being so summoned. Any adventurer who does not convince Straasha to let him have the Codex will be returned to the edge of the lake empty handed.

An undine can retrieve the book in an instant, but the gamemaster should check to see if this irritates Straasha as if the undine were being bound by the sorcerer. This will have the usual consequences. Alternatively, the characters might try to devise a scheme to drain the lake, making the grotto accessible by foot. The timespan involved here could be considerable, not to mention the amount of help the party would need. It may, however, be a possibility the GM has to contend with.

Using a Demon of Desire to get the Codex will not enrage Straasha. It will, however, unleash the Codex's Chaotic Guardian. The condition for this is specific. If a Demon of Desire is commanded to bring the Codex to its master, then the monster is unleashed. Demons of Desire assisting indirectly do not cause the monster's release. For example, a Demon commanded to keep its master alive underwater would not activate the guardian.

If the adventurers found the breathing apparatus in the ruins, they may decide to use it. It will take 20 minutes to walk to the middle of the lake, 10 minutes to find the book and a further 20 to return. If the adventurers are unsure where to look, roll 1D4 for the number of hours needed to find the grotto, get the book and return. The tank has 1D6 hours of air left in it.



Chaos Creature, Guardian of the Whispering Codex

STR 36 CON 41 SIZ 93 INT 12 POW 9 DEX 16 HP 122

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Bite	40%	1D10+3D6	40%
Tail bash	30%	1D8+3D6	
Crush	*	8D6	

Armour: 10 point scales

Special Abilities: Hypnosis

* If a target is bitten, it must roll under its DEX x2% or become caught in the creature's coils. Every combat round, the victim will be crushed - the creature will maintain its grip until the victim is dead, or the beast is slain. While being crushed, a victim can use no weapons except those suitable for very close quarters, like daggers.

The creature can fix a target in its gaze and try to mesmerise it. This takes one whole combat round, during which the creature will not attack. The creature has a chance of 66% (minus the target's POW) of hypnotising its victim. Hypnotised creatures and adventurers leave themselves open to being bitten on the next round, and the guardian will have double its normal bite percentage. Mesmerised adventurers who are bitten are automatically caught in the creature's coils.

The creature resembles a giant serpent with a pike's head and a broad, oar-like tail. It takes 1D6 combat rounds to manifest, growing from a minute serpent to giant size. During this time adventurers may attack it without danger of reprisal. Thereafter it attacks without quarter until outrun or slain. The beast can slither at 20 km/h without tiring.

RESOLUTION

The way the adventure turns out depends on the attitude of the players and how their characters ally themselves with the NPCs. Players who take a paranoid, sword-happy approach will have a dull time, and most probably fail. Those whose characters use the non-player characters' aid to the best advantage should do well. Remember, everyone is trying to manipulate everyone else, and they're all after the Codex.

It is most likely the Codex will be obtained by some form of sorcery. If Elementals are employed, there is a chance that the characters may meet with Straasha. The gamemaster should take time and care over this encounter. It may be the only time the characters or players ever have such an experience.

Straasha's demands will not be extreme if the players show respect and eloquence. He will relinquish the Codex if they promise to erect a shore-side shrine to him, or some other service, such as flooding a temple of Kakatal. Naturally, unless the characters have something immediate to offer they will be taking the Codex 'on credit', and suffer Straasha's anger if they fail in their part of the bargain.

A Demon of Desire may be used to obtain the Codex directly, or, less likely, to duplicate the breathing apparatus or provide air for the characters while they travel underwater. While submersed, characters will only be able to move slowly, communicate by sign language and use thrusting weapons such as spears.

This adventure has ample opportunities for roleplaying. The gamemaster has several distinctive non-player characters at his disposal. Whether they aid or obstruct the characters will depend on how the various factions deal with each other. For example, they may all agree to search together, until someone has the Codex, when it becomes every man and woman for themselves.

If the characters have found out where the Codex is hidden, but do not have the means to obtain it, even though the gamemaster feels they deserve to acquire it, Ziamora may personally intervene - and take the Codex off them.

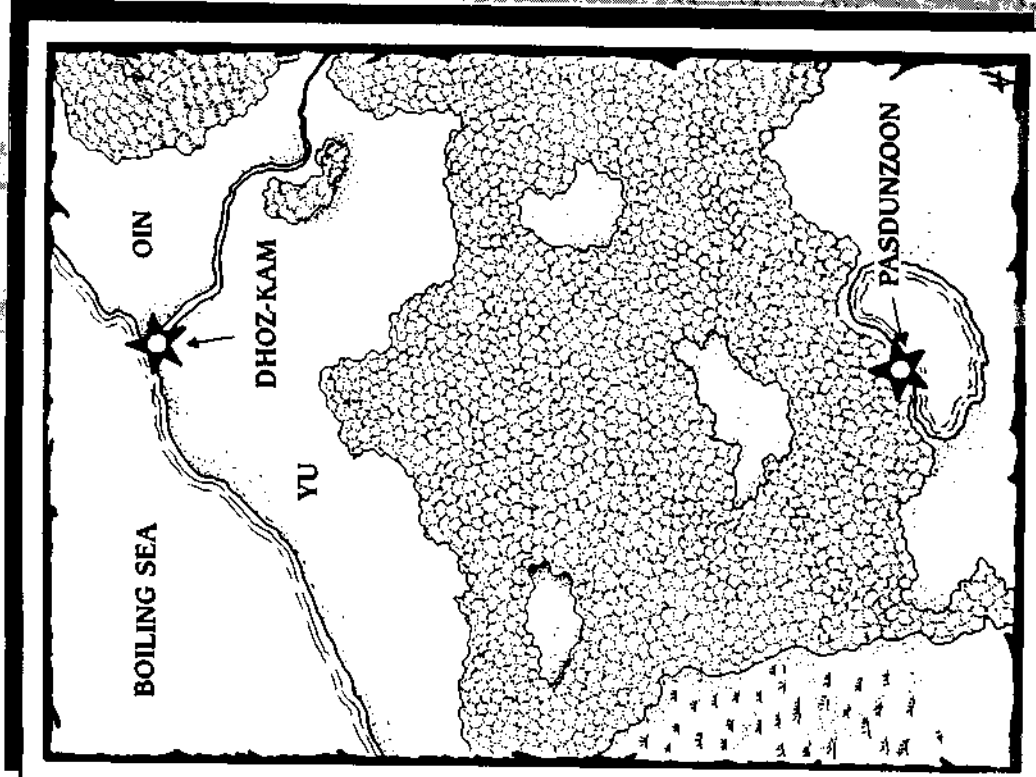
The adventure ends once the Codex is finally taken out of Pasdunzoon with no doubt as to who owns it. Schemes for its theft or revenge involving Taar, Torvlim Nosam or Ellshara can be the springboard for another adventure.

Matt Williams



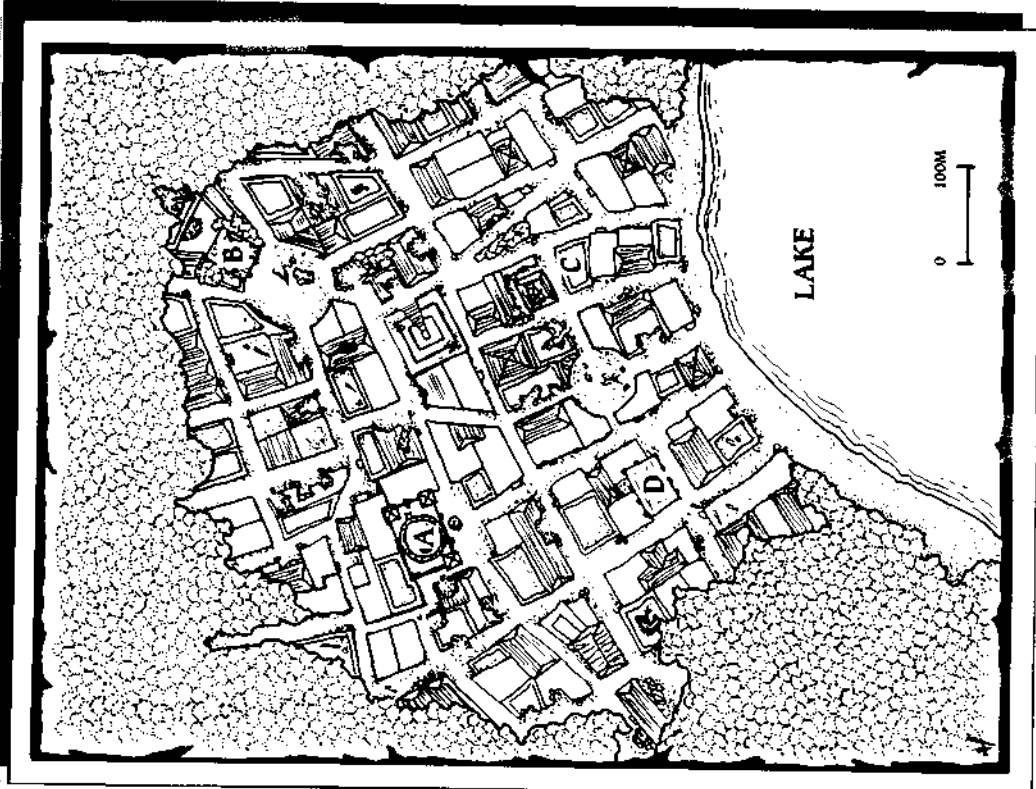
TONY ACKLAND

THE JUNGLES OF OIN AND YU



FOR BOTH MAPS

PASDUNZOON



THE MADCAP LAUGHS

EMPRESS ON THE EMERALD SHORE
Part 3 of a Stormbringer adventure

By Matt Williams

INTRODUCTION

This is the third and final part of *The Madcap Laughs*. The adventure started in WD95, which contains an outline of the campaign structure. If you don't have copies of WD95-97 (back issues are available - see the advertisement elsewhere in this issue), this instalment may be played as a one-off adventure, given a little modification. The information given below (*The Story So Far*) should help you in this.

THE STORY SO FAR

Balo the Jester, one of the Gods of Chaos, is planning a huge joke on the Gods of both Law and Chaos. Aeons ago, he created the race of the Essegraani, but they turned from him and began to worship Law. He appeared to them claiming to be Amma-y-Graan, a God of Law, and in this guise became their patron deity. Then, as Balo, he returned and banished them to an eternal nightmare-haunted sleep. Later, Balo freed Ziamora - Queen and High Priestess of the Essegraani, pretending to be Amma-y-Gran using the last of his powers. She now believes that she can free her race and its nonexistent patron deity with an item called the Key of Mirikos. Having obtained both the Key and an arcane tome called the Whispering Codex, she is preparing to perform the rituals which will bring about the completion of Balo's joke. The player characters are bound up with this, perhaps unknowing, and are destined to be in at the finish.

GM'S INTRODUCTION

By the start of this adventure, the player characters should be starting to worry about Ziamora. Although, if they were wise, they will have avoided her wrath in the first adventure, they will be aware that she has an interest in the Key of Mirikos, and they may know that she is also interested in the Whispering Codex.

This instalment draws together various threads from the past. The

characters meet Ziamora again - this time on her home ground. Their ranks are reinforced by Darsu Dherac and Meldic the Golden, representatives of Chaos and Law respectively.

The adventure is divided into three parts - a bandit ambush, a journey between worlds, and the final conflict. At the end, Balo reveals his joke, and hands out reward or retribution as he sees fit.

AMBUSH

This instalment opens with the characters travelling; whence and whither are not important. They are attacked by bandits - a common enough occurrence, and one which has no connection with the main plot, whatever the players may conclude. Their situation appears hopeless, but they are rescued by the sudden and mysterious appearance of Darsu Dherac, a face from their past, and Meldic the Golden.

To start the adventure, read the following to the players:

It is a pleasant day for travel. The trail ahead winds down a leafy vale, and in the distance you can see a thin line of rising smoke, perhaps from a woodcutter's hut. The path dips through a grove of trees which form an arch above it.

Pause slightly at this point to give the players a little time to react to their surroundings if they wish.

There is a sudden shout, and the air is filled with the hum of arrows.

If the players have given no indication that their characters are prepared for an attack (ie if they said nothing when you paused), they are surprised.

The bandits - twenty in all - are concealed in the trees, and have the advantage of height and cover. All have *Desert Bow* 50%. After three volleys of arrows (spread equally among the characters), ten leap from the branches to attack, as the remainder continue to fire from the cover of the trees. The bandits are brave and ruthless, but wary of magic.

Bandit 1 (leader)						
STR 12	CON 11	SIZ 8	INT 14	POW 10	DEX 15	HP 9

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Battle axe	50%	1D8+2	65%

Armour: 1D8-1 half-plate

Bandits Two-Ten						
STR 14	CON 12	SIZ 18	INT 9	POW 10	DEX 11	HP 18

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Desert Bow	50%	1D10+2	-
Falchion	45%	1D6+2	55%

Armour: 1D6-1 leather

All bandits have the following skills: Ambush 60%, Climb 40%, Dodge 45%, Hide 60%, Listen 30%, Jump 45%, Move Quietly 45%, See 30%, Track 30%.





The bandits have hung weighted nets at either end of the gully. These are let down when the arrows begin to fly, and may be detected by any character on a See roll, *only* if the player states that the character is examining the leafy arch. The nets are designed to entangle riders, and any mounted character attempting to get out of the glade must make a critical *Ride* roll or become entangled, unable to move or fight until released. Characters on foot can slip round the side of the net and avoid entanglement on a successful DEX x 5% roll. The bandits can do this at will.

Apart from their weapons and armour, each bandit will be carrying 2D100 LB.

RESCUE

After five combat rounds - or earlier if the characters look unable to survive that long - the ten bandits in the trees will break cover and move in to finish off the survivors with their daggers. The players should begin to despair of the characters surviving the attack at this point.

Suddenly, a clear voice is heard from the trees at one side of the path, chanting in High Melnibonean. Almost instantly, a burst of flame rips across the path, killing three of the bandits. With a bellowing warcry, a golden-armoured figure bursts from the trees a little way off, cutting down two more with a huge greatsword. The remaining bandits turn to flight, not waiting to see a great black dog lined in fire charging from the trees with a familiar grey-robed figure trotting behind it, shortsword in hand.

Once all the bandits are killed or have fled, the rescuers approach the characters. Some of the characters, at least, will recognise the robbed one as Darsu Dhberac, who recently hired them to recover his kidnapped children and the Key of Mirikos from Ziamora. If you have not played the first adventure in this series, *A Heart of Dust*, *a Hand of Death*, assume that the characters succeeded in recovering the children but not the key.

'We meet again,' he says sardonically. With a word and a gesture, the black dog - a fire elemental - vanishes. Then he waves toward his armoured companion with obvious distaste.

'This,' he says disdainfully, 'styles himself Meldic the Golden. A follower of Law whose blood would long since have soaked into the dust at my feet, had Him Whom I Serve not forbidden it.'

The armoured warrior removes his helm to reveal a well-fashioned face with short golden hair and a neat-cropped beard of the same colour. 'This suits my taste no better, Dherbac,' he grates, as he sets about healing any wounded characters. Without looking up, he tells his tale.

'You know of one Ziamora, a sorceress. From her stronghold in a cursed place called the Emerald World, she plans to release the Banished God, unwitting that this will tip things in Chaos' favour. One mortal alone cannot thwart her design, so it is ordained we walk together awhile, even if I must tolerate this servant of Chaos, Dhberac. Be that as it may, it seems we arrived just in time. Or have the gods had a hand in this? Your lives are charmed, or fated.'

'Fate or design,' Dhberac puts in, 'I have dreamed all this. My master sent me here to meet you. The Banished God was imprisoned by the Dukes of Chaos, countless ages ago. What nature of revenge, then, might he have schemed in his exile? But it is too much to bear that I must co-operate with this *Meldic the Brazen*:

Meldic colours but says nothing. All through the adventure the two will snipe at each other, although it will not quite come to blows; their mutual hatred is checked by the importance of the mission.

Meldic the Golden, Imloran Knight of Law

STR 17 CON 19 SIZ 16 INT 12 POW 10 DEX 13 CHA 20 HP 24

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Greatsword	77%	2D8 + 1D6	89%
Battle axe	55%	1D8+2 + 1D6	65%
Shortsword	45%	1D6+1 + 1D6	55%
Shield (heater)	30%	1D6+2	75%

Armour: 10 point Virtuous plate

Skills: Ambush 80%, Climb 45%, Dodge 65%, First Aid 74%, Listen 33%, Navigate 36%, Move Quietly 34%, Orate 55%, Plant Lore 68%, Ride 63%, See 42%, Tie/Untie Knot 28%.

Languages: Common: Speak 80%, R/W 80%; Low Melnibonean: Speak 40%.

Meldic's greatsword, shield and plate armour are Virtuous, with POW of 20, 9 and 14 respectively. They always deal out or absorb maximum damage (bonuses are still rolled separately). They are all in part fashioned from gold, hence Meldic's name.

Meldic is tall and fair-haired, with a well-groomed beard. He is jovial and down-to-earth, with a strong sense of natural justice. Now a man of 50, he has served the cause of Law since his youth.

Meldic wears an amber pendant that glows in the presence of Demons. He also has 6 doses of a healing philtre; each dose restores 2D6 Hit Points in as many hours.

Meldic travels in an airship, built for him by the priests of Law.

Meldic's Airship

This is woven from golden silk, emblazoned with the sign of Law. It has a wooden gondola and Virtuous engines (15 POW each) which can propel it at 20 km/h. The airship has SIZ 900 and 60 HP. It can carry up to 150 SIZ points in the gondola, which is equipped after the fashion of a large sea vessel. More details on airships are given in the section headed *Airships of the Priests of Law* (WD95, pp 60-61).

Darsu Dhberac

Information on Dhberac is given in *A Heart of Dust*, *A Hand of Death* (WD 96, p 73). Apart from having equipped himself for the expedition, he is unchanged.

Dhberac has a scroll which - when read - will create a Gateway to the Emerald World. From his research, he knows this to be a place of icy plains, close to the influence of Chaos.

THE JOURNEY

The journey to the Emerald World is in two stages. First, to the edge of the world (ie off the world map), where conditions are more suited to sorcery. In Meldic's airship the journey will take 3-4 days, depending on the precise location of the last encounter. The journey will be

untroubled, giving the characters time to become acquainted with their two companions, conduct research, plan strategy, pool information and so on. Travelling on foot is not practical - stress the vast distance, the uncountable hazards and the urgency of the mission.

At the edge of the world, Dherac will read his scroll which summons a Gateway Demon in the form of a spectral king. If desired, the characters can take Meldic's airship through the Gateway, but as will be seen below, it has a chance of malfunctioning in the Emerald World, because of the proximity to Chaos.

It is not vital to make the journey by airship. If characters are able (and willing), they could conjure a Gateway Demon to transport them to the Emerald World directly; they may wish it to manifest physically and act as a guide, since the Emerald World is unknown to them.

THE EMERALD WORLD

The Emerald World is a place of almost unbroken icy plains, with a few low mountain ranges. Light green snow lies on the ground in places. Where the inky green sea meets the land there are high, crumbling emerald cliffs. The lime green-sun hangs perpetually on the horizon, bathing the Emerald World in perpetual viridian twilight, with no moon, stars or clouds. The weather and atmosphere are similar to the Young Kingdoms in early winter.

There is no vegetation, and animals are few and alien - such as azure storks with scarlet legs 10 metres long, and listless blue-and-yellow striped zebra. Wildlife will generally try to avoid the adventurers. While on the Emerald World, characters will not need to eat, drink or sleep, regaining their strength merely by a few hours rest.

The Emerald Citadel - a huge castle hewn from the living rock - is visible all across the Emerald World, like a bright green star on the horizon. The adventurers will arrive 1D100+60 km from it.

Chaotic Corruption

While in the Emerald World, the characters may be affected by the proximity of Chaos. Check once before they reach the Citadel, and once every rest period, using a POW x 4% roll. For each failed test, select an effect from the following table, or roll dice for random determination.

2D6 Roll Effect

2-3	Over a space of 1D6 hours, the character's skin turns green and leathery. It becomes as tough as leather armour, and will absorb 1D6-1 damage, but DEX is reduced by 3 owing to the stiffness of the changed skin.
4-5	The character's nose turns to jelly and drops off. Lose 4 CHA, and Scent skill drops to 05%.
6	The character's flesh turns lumpy and warty. Lose 2 CHA.
7	The character feels nauseous, and retches continuously. All skills are reduced by 20%.
8-9	One of the character's eyes turns into an emerald. See skill is reduced by half, and all combat skills drop by 10%. If removed from the character's head, the emerald will be

worth D6 x 500LB, but the operation will cause 1D6 damage to the character, and the gem has a 75% chance of turning back into an eyeball 1D8 weeks after returning to the Young Kingdoms.

10-11	The character's fingers elongate to 30cm. Weapon and manipulation skills are all halved.
12	The character is driven mad by the forces of Chaos, filled with insane laughter, and tittering at the slightest prompting. The character has the personality of a child and behaves as one.

These effects are permanent as long as the character stays on the Emerald World. On returning to the Young Kingdoms, affected characters making a successful POW x 5% roll will revert to normal over 1D8 weeks. Otherwise, they must seek out a sorcerer to restore them to their former state.

Virtuous objects, and those designed on the principles of Law, have a POW x 5% chance of resisting corruption. If corrupted, they become useless, and break the first time they are used. Non-Virtuous objects which utilise Lawful principles have a 15% chance of being corrupted. Check every game hour.

Emerald World Encounters

As the characters travel across the Emerald World, they will have an encounter about every three game hours. Amend or drop encounters if they will weaken the party dangerously - they are meant to be no more than a diversion on the way to the Emerald Citadel, and an encouragement to go there directly.

Some possible encounters are listed below. They can either be selected or determined randomly, and the GM should feel free to add further encounters of his own devising if desired. Try not to use an encounter more than once (except *Metallic Rocks*) unless there is a good reason for it - for example, if the PCs return to the site of an encounter, in which they left some of the encountered creatures alive.

Encounter Table

D10 Roll	Encounter
1-7	Metallic Rocks
8	Stone Hut
9	Emerald Pylon
10	Demons' Ransom

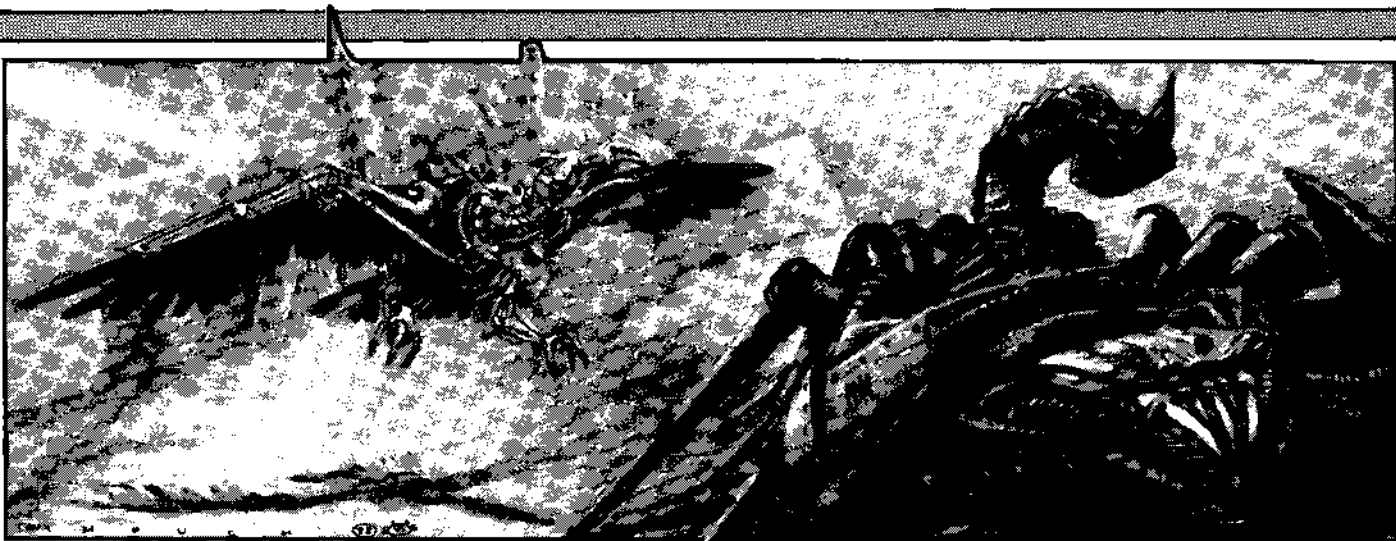
Metallic Rocks

The adventurers come across a group of small orange rocks, with metallic surfaces. If they sit near them for any length of time, the rocks begin to hum, and deliver a small electric shock for 1 Hit Point to any character touching them.

Stone Hut

The adventurers come across an apparently abandoned stone hut. It is empty but for a stone table, on which are arranged some curiously-shaped fragments of green ice. The shapes can be fitted together to spell the word *Eternity* in High Melnibonean. Any character can fit them together on an INT x 5% roll, but is instantly turned to green ice. The character is not dead, but is trapped in this icy tomb for all eternity.





Emerald Pylon

The adventurers find a slender, windowless tower, 100 metres high and 3 meters in diameter, with a single door in the base. The door is a Demon Door, and if any non-Essegraani character tries to go through it, it will speak in the Essegraani language, warning that it will destroy them if they enter the tower. Characters who persist in entering the tower must defeat the door in a POW v POW struggle or die.

Demon's Door

CON 40 SIZ 16 INT 9 POW 17

Inside the tower is a spiral staircase, leading to a balcony at the top. From this vantage point, it is possible to see for some distance, including the Emerald Citadel and a wide expanse of salt marsh and shoreline.

Demons' Ransom

The adventurers are approached by two Demons of Combat. One resembles a man with a dog's head, the other a woman with six arms. They demand a ransom of blood from all who seek to pass. Characters paying the ransom lose 1D4 Hit Points. The Demons attack any character who refuses their demand.

Demon of combat One

STR 13 CON 42 SIZ 18 INT 10 POW 15 DEX 13 HP 48

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Broadsword	55%	1D8+2 + 4D6	63%

Armour: 1D8-1 half-plate

The sword is a Demon weapon, with the following statistics: STR 30 CON 25 SIZ 2 POW 16 DEX 20 +3D6 damage, +5% attack/parry

Demon of combat two

STR 13 CON 36 SIZ 14 INT 11 POW 9 DEX 16 HP 38

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Broadsword	60%	1D8+1 + 1D6	75%
Battle axe	60%	1D8+2 + 1D6	75%
Falchion	60%	1D6+2 + 1D6	75%
Scimitar	45%	1D8+1 + 1D6	50%
Short sword	45%	1D6+1 + 1D6	50%
Light mace	45%	1D6+1 + 1D6	50%

Armour: 1D10+2 plate with helmet

The Oonai Marsh

Sixty kilometres from the Emerald Citadel is a long, narrow band of salt marsh, filled with sleeping lizards. Gateway Demons will not enter the marsh, saying that they are forbidden. It is not possible to reach the Emerald Citadel without crossing the marsh.

The marsh is 3 to 5 kilometres wide, stretching endlessly in either direction. It presents no obstacle to airborne travellers, but characters on foot must cross by wading waist-deep in freezing water, or by using punts if they have some means of obtaining them. Every hundred

metres or so lies the half-submerged bulk of what seems to be a purple-grey dragon - actually an Oonai. Disturbances, such as nearby fighting, have a 30% chance of waking 1D3 Oonai, which will attack at once, retaining their dragon form unless they see some advantage in doing otherwise. The Oonai will not wake if the characters pass by quietly.

Oonai

STR 23 CON 23 SIZ 22 INT 9 POW 22 DEX 23 HP 33

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Claw	50%	*	50%
Bite	35%	*	
Other	*	*	

Armour: As creature imitated.

* depends on the creature imitated. In dragon form, for example, a claw would do 9D6 damage.

Approaching the Emerald Citadel

Beyond the marsh lies the Emerald Shore, a narrow peninsula with the Emerald Citadel standing at the end. From one tower, a green light shines across the wilderness like a wrecker's beacon. As the wind whips across the peninsula, the air is filled with deep booming notes, as if blown on a giant conch shell.

Unless the adventurers are taking care to conceal themselves (ie using the relevant skills successfully), their approach may be noticed. If they approach by air, there is a 30% chance they will be noticed. On foot, there is only a 10% chance. If the adventurers are spotted, nothing will happen until they are within one kilometre of the Citadel. The action taken will then depend of their method of approach.

If the adventurers approach unnoticed, they can enter the Citadel without opposition.

In Meldic's airship: The Citadel's beacon will be used to shoot them down. It has a 60% chance to hit, and can fire three times before the airship is too close to fire at. On a successful hit the airship will be shot down, every passenger taking 1D6 damage per 10 metres fallen.

Flying by some other means: A Brass Vulture will flap to attack them from one of the towers. It is made of brass, with jewelled eyes, and makes a screeching noise as the air rushes through its feathers. It can fly at 30 km/h.

Brass Vulture

STR 26 CON 18 SIZ 36 INT 8 POW 8 DEX 15 HP 42

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Claw	40%	4D6	40%
Peck	35%	3D6	
Wing buffet	20%	2D6	

Armour: 12 point metal feathers

On foot: twelve Iron Scorpions will be sent to attack them.

Iron Scorpion

STR 14 CON 24 SIZ 14 INT 5 POW 8 DEX 16 HP 28

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Claw x2	40%	2D6	60%
Stinger	*	ID10 plus poison	

Armour: 10 point metal skin

* If a target is hit by both claws at once, the stinger hits automatically. If it penetrates the target's armour, it injects a paralysing poison which renders the character completely helpless in ID6 rounds. The effects last for 2D6+30 minutes.

Paralysed characters will be taken back to the Citadel. The scorpions can only carry people whose **SIZ** is less than their own; others will be dragged a short way and then left behind.

THE EMERALD CITADEL

The Emerald Citadel is carved from the living green rock. It is translucent, and gleams in the perpetual twilight.

The layout of the Citadel can be seen from the plan. The walls are 30 metres high and smooth, and there are three main towers: the wide, twin-towered Gatehouse, the slender Royal Tower and the squat Sleeping Keep. The courtyard is vaulted by a single dome, through which rise the great brass tubes of the Vortex, like those of an ornate pipe-organ. The wind draws deafening chords from the tubes, and inside the Citadel every noise echoes, even the quietest whisper. All *Move Quietly* skills are reduced by 40%.

1. Gatehouse. This is the only way into the Citadel. The towers are reinforced by twisting buttresses, and the 25 metre-high doors stand ajar wide enough to admit men three abreast. Closing the doors requires a combined strength of 105 or more. The towers - 60 metres high - have three floors and a flat roof, and the left tower is surmounted by the beacon.

The beacon can be used as a weapon, with a range of 1 kilometre. Any character with INT 12 or more can work the controls. The beam takes 1 minute to aim and charge, and does 40 points of damage. Untrained users have an INT x 2% chance of hitting their target.

It is possible to train the beam on the Vortex; it will destroy the vaulting over the courtyard, all the energy will be absorbed and the beam will become useless. There is ID100% chance that the crystal inside the Vortex will be destroyed (see below).

Characters paralysed and captured by the Iron Scorpions will be bound and manacled on the ground floor of the right tower. The Brass Vulture and twelve Iron Scorpions will also be here, if not previously destroyed.

2. Royal Tower. This is a slender, tapering tower 70 metres high, which houses Ziamora's quarters. Each of the five floors is sumptuously appointed. Ziamora confines herself to the fifth floor, where the balcony allows her to stare out over the wastes as she plans her revenge.

When the adventurers arrive, Ziamora will be here preparing for the ritual to release her god.

3. Sleeping Keep. A squat pentagonal keep barely reaching above the walls, this is the tomb of the sleeping Essegraani. The Keep extends 100 metres below ground. Its 33 floors (one every three metres) are no more than balconies, each lined with 80 coffin-like alcoves holding 80

sleeping Essegraani. One, on the lowest level, is empty, as are six on the ground level. A *See* roll is necessary to notice the 10-metre square stone door in the side facing the Sleeping Keep.

4. Courtyard. This area is featureless, apart from the Vortex at the centre and the apparently randomly-spaced columns, which combine with the uneven light to create unusual areas of shadow.

5. The Vortex. This is a 20-metre cube of seamless green rock, fantastically carved with whirls and spirals. Brass pipes of all sizes rise from the top, fanning out before they pierce the vaulting. As the characters approach the Vortex, a pulsing sound like a beating heart grows stronger and stronger.

Inside the Vortex, at the centre, is a pulsating crystal the size of an elephant, held in place by a score of brass pipes, which hum in time with the crystal's pulse. There is a darkness at the crystal's centre, and any character who makes a *See* roll can make out the shape of a beating heart.

The Vortex is the apparent prison of Amma-y-Graan. When the characters enter, whispering voices will surround them.

Welcome, welcome, free me, free me:

Each character will hear the voices speak successively in every language that he or she knows.

If the characters converse with the Vortex it acts as a Demon of Knowledge, with INT and POW of 99. It will tell them the following story:

'I am Amma-y-Graan, Master of the Vortex, Creator of the Essegraani. Long ago, before men were thoughts in the mind of Chaos, I created the Essegraani here in the Emerald World. They were my children, but the Dukes of Hell toyed with them like playthings. I dared to protect them - I gave them science - but the Lords of Chaos banished me here, with my children in eternal slumber. Now the time is near when we shall be free. And our vengeance shall be terrible.'

There is a whispered chorus of *'Free, free, vengeance, vengeance:*

The Master of the Vortex continues:

'My child Ziamora will release me within the hour. I have taught her the rituals with my remaining strength, and she has the Key of Mirikos whose touch may then free rather than destroy me. Then shall our vengeance begin, and no world shall escape our wrath. Aeons have I chafed in my imprisonment, dreaming of the day when my children shall rule all worlds, and dreading the touch of a Demon-blade which might destroy my prison and doom me for eternity. You are privileged to witness the beginning of our vengeance.'

As Amma-y-Graan has hinted, the crystal may be destroyed by the touch of the Key of Mirikos if the ritual has not been completed, and it may also be destroyed by a Demon weapon of 16 or greater POW, if the wielder can inflict at least 40 points of damage in one blow. Any other weapon striking the crystal is destroyed - even Demon weapons that fail a POW x 1 roll. It is also possible to destroy the crystal using the beacon in the Gatehouse tower, as mentioned above.

If the crystal is destroyed, refer to the section below headed *When the Demon Lord Manifests.*





Ziamora and the Essegraani

The Essegraani are a cruel and noble race, who carry an air of sorrow about them. Those few that have woken from their slumber are acutely aware that they are a fated race. Their sense of humour, if they have one, is limited to black, ironic comments. All Essegraani consider non-Essegraani inferior, and as a consequence, they tend to underestimate their ability.

Ziamora, The Emerald Empress

Ziamora is detailed in *A Heart of Dust, A Hand of Death*. She will be essentially the same, although the gamemaster may re-design her Demons. Any injuries sustained previously will be completely healed.

In the Emerald Citadel, she wears an ornate gold collar and epaulettes, and a pointed crown of gold, set with emeralds.

Ziamora wears the Key of Mirikos round her neck like a pendant. If this seems impossible because of events in a previous adventure, the gamemaster should use this excuse to hint at the dark powers she possesses.

The Essegraani Garrison

Ziamora has managed to revive six other Essegraani to garrison the Citadel. They are based in the Gatehouse, where Irandiora, the garrison commander, and two others will be manning the beacon on the roof. The rest will be on the ground floor, guarding any prisoners. If the expedition has been spotted, one of them will have been sent to warn Ziamora.

The garrison has the Brass Vulture and Iron Scorpions at its disposal, unless they have already been destroyed. These can be controlled by any of the Essegraani. Likewise, all the Essegraani can use the beacon's beam as a weapon with 60% skill.

Four Essegraani are needed to assist Ziamora in the ritual, which takes place inside the Vortex. Once the ritual has begun, the remaining two will guard the entrance to the Vortex with their lives. Ideally, the garrison will capture at least one of the characters to use as a sacrifice in the ritual.

Irاندiorا, Essegraani Garrison Commander
STR 14 CON 16 SIZ 15 INT 16 POW 17 DEX 15 CHA 18 HP 19

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Scimitar*	66%	1D8+1+4D6	80%
Shield (heater)	30%	1D6+1	60%

Armour: * 21 point Demon half-plate

Skills: Ambush 55%, Dodge 75%, Hide 40%, First Aid 45%, Listen 40%, Search 45%, See 40%, Track 55%.

Summonings: Elementals: Air 96%, Earth 56%; Demons: Possession 98%, Transport 42%.

Irاندiorا is a sorcerer of the second rank. If her Iron Scorpions have captured any characters, she will have summoned a Demon of Possession and bound it to them.

The other five members of the garrison are treated as identical. The GM may vary their statistics slightly if desired.

Essegraani Warrior
STR 14 CON 12 SIZ 15 INT 13 POW 13 DEX 13 CHA 13 HP 15

Weapon	Attack	Damage	Parry
Scimitar*	56%	1D8+1+4D6	65%
Shield (heater)	30%	1D6+1	50%

Armour: * 21 point Demon half-plate

Skills: Ambush 45%, Dodge 55%, Hide 40%, First Aid 45%, Listen 40%, Search 45%, See 40%, Track 45%.

* All the Essegraani have similar Demon weapons and armour with the following statistics.

Demon scimitar
STR 30 CON 15 SIZ 2 DEX 40 POW 8
+3D6 damage, +10% attack/parry chance

Demon half-plate armour CON 21 SIZ as wearer POW 8

They all speak, read and write their own language at 100%, and speak Common at 40%.

SUMMONING THE BANISHED GOD

Time Schedule

Once the characters arrive in the Emerald Citadel, they will have three hours at most before Ziamora's ritual. As soon as she realises that they pose a genuine threat - for example, if they manage to kill one of the garrison - she will begin early. The ritual takes 20 minutes to complete.

Organising Events

There are a limited number of strategies open to the adventurers.

1. Direct Assault. In this case, the Essegraani will deploy their Brass Vulture and Iron Scorpions against them, only fighting personally as a last resort. One of the Essegraani will warn Ziamora, and the ritual will begin. Ziamora will dispatch her Demon of Combat, and summon Chaos creatures with her Demon of Desire if need be. The opposition should delay the adventurers just long enough for them to burst into the Vortex as the ritual reaches its conclusion.

2. Stealth. The adventurers decide to sneak in and sabotage the Vortex or disrupt the ritual. They may sneak in, and opt for a direct assault later. Provided they are not noticed approaching, they will not be discovered unless they draw undue attention to themselves. This approach is likely to involve some sorcery: since the scope of possible sorcery is vast, the gamemaster must decide on how it alters the train of events.

3. Long-range. The adventurers use Demons to do the dirty work. Unless they have means of checking, they will not know whether the Demons have succeeded, or even followed their orders. In such a case, assume that Ziamora's ritual succeeds, and at the moment of completion Balo summons them to the Vortex.

4. Imprisoned Characters. The first character captured by the Essegraani will be used as a sacrifice in the summoning, and any others will be taken along, giving Ziamora the opportunity to gloat. They will be gagged and manacled. The first character captured will be possessed by a Demon if Irاندiorا thinks trouble is on the way.

All the Essegraani have one object in mind - to release their god. They will give up their lives without question. If a sacrificial victim is missing, one of the assistants will stab him/herself at the right time. If there are no assistants, Ziamora will sacrifice her own life.

The Summoning

The climax should be played for maximum dramatic impact. Don't be afraid to fudge the timing if necessary. After all, what effort of mere mortals can interfere with a Chaos Lord's enjoyment?

The ritual requires the following: four Essegraani assistants, the Key of Mirikos, the Whispering Codex, and one human or human-like sacrifice. With all these components, the chance of success is 97%. If some elements are missing, Ziamora will go ahead, the chance of success being reduced, as follows:

Each missing assistant	10%
No sacrifice	10%
No Key of Mirikos	90%
No Whispering Codex	20%.

First, the four assistants chant to purify the room. Then, Ziamora reads from the Codex:

*Banished God in crystal Hell
Cursed by jealous Chaos Lords
With blood and Key I break your shell
Come, Amma-y-Graan, to the Emerald World!*

She plunges her dagger into the sacrifice and touches the Key of Mirikos to the Vortex. If all this is done smoothly and without interruption, the being inside will manifest.

If - somehow - the summoning goes wrong, the Vortex will start pulsing erratically. The pipes whistle shrilly as the pulsing becomes brighter and brighter. After 5 combat rounds the crystal explodes. The Demon Lord materialises, absorbing all the energy from the explosion: no-one is harmed by it.

When the Demon Lord Manifests

The Demon Lord manifests whether or not the summoning succeeds. He will call himself Amma-y-Graan, but is in fact Balo, the Jester of Chaos. He can take whatever shape the gamemaster likes, but the more gigantic and loathsome the better.

If Ziamora has successfully summoned him, the Demon Lord will allow her a brief moment of glory before revealing his true identity. Otherwise, he will make a show of terrorizing the mortals, breathing fire, summoning lightning and so on - but harming no-one except in self-defence. He will ask them to give him a reason why he should not destroy them. As they start to speak, he will bellow 'Silence!' The ground shakes, and the characters are thrown to the ground as the building starts to collapse. Everything is obscured by smoke.

Suddenly, the shaking stops. The smoke clears, and the adventurers behold a small Bhudda-like man sitting on a donkey. Balo - for it is he - will express his delight at how well the joke worked, and explain the whole story. He will reward the adventurers for their part in the joke. They may have anything the most powerful Demon of Desire could bring them, but the gifts are bound to be jinxed, as Balo's nature dictates - Demon swords might argue for 1D6 rounds before agreeing to fight, and so on. Balo will also offer to transport them to anywhere they desire in the Young Kingdoms. Where they actually end up is left to the GM.

If Ziamora is still alive when Balo makes his revelation, she will be torn with anguish, cursing the gods of Chaos with all her might. She might even kill herself in despair - that is up to the GM.

Meldic the Golden and Darsu Dhberac will be outraged that their time has been wasted on a hoax, although Meldic will be more inclined to see the funny side of it. Dhberac will be moody and bitter, especially as Balo will call him 'little man'.

Once Balo has had his joke, he will vanish into thin air. His echoing voice remains briefly:

The best of it is, the joke is just beginning! Ha, ha, ha, ha...

This statement has no meaning, but will probably worry the characters for a little while. This is exactly what Balo wants.

THE END

