

AN **ELRIC!** SUPPLEMENT

# MELNIBONÉ

**DRAGON ISLE AND DREAMING CITY**

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# A DEAD EMPIRE.

**MELNIBONÉ** IS AN ISLAND, AN ARCHIPELAGO SET AMIDST THE OLDEST OCEAN. FOR 10,000 YEARS THE BRIGHT EMPIRE OF MELNIBONÉ RULED THE WORLD. THE FOLK OF MELNIBONÉ ARE NOT HUMAN, AND THEIR RACE IS FAR OLDER THAN HUMANITY.

**POWERFUL SORCERERS**, THEIR MAGIC COMES EASILY TO THEM, AS EASY AS BREATHING. THEY FORGED UNTHINKABLE PACTS WITH DEMON GODS, SHAPED THE ELEMENTS AND LANDS TO THEIR LIKING, AND TAMED DRAGONS AND RODE THEM TO CONQUEST.

**AGE HAS DULLED** THE BRIGHT EMPIRE, TARNISHED ITS BEAUTY, AND WEAKENED ITS PEOPLE. THE EMPIRE ROTS FROM WITHIN. SOON A NEW EMPEROR WILL COME TO THE RUBY THRONE, AND RESCUE MELNIBONÉ FROM ITS DOTAGE.

**ELRIC IS THAT EMPEROR**, A BROODING ALBINO UNHAPPY WITH HIS PRE-ORDAINED LIFE. HE RAILS AGAINST THE GODS OF CHAOS, HIS CULTURE, AND HIS PROUD ANCESTORS. WILL HE BRING THE BRIGHT EMPIRE BACK TO ITS FORMER GLORY, OR SEND IT TO ITS EXTINCTION?

MICHAEL MOORCOCK'S

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In this game, certain heroes discover secrets about the world of the Young Kingdoms, the nature of the universe, the gods of Law and Chaos, and their plans for the future. You and your friends will portray ordinary people from the Young Kingdoms who seek adventure and the secrets to the mysteries of life. You will face the same situations and dangers that Elric, Moonglum, Dorian Hawkmoon and Corum encountered, but this time you are in control and the results depend on what you decide your character should do.

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# MELNIBONÉ

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DRAGON ISLE AND DREAMING CITY







"SHINING LIKE DIAMONDS, OR LIKE THE SPARKLE OF  
SUNLIGHT UPON THE WAVES, WERE THE CITIES OF THE  
BRIGHT EMPIRE. AND LIKE THE WAVES, THE 10,000 YEARS  
OF MELNIBONÉ'S REIGN UPON THE WORLD WERE DRAWN  
BACK BY THE TIDE OF TIME."

— THE CHRONICLE OF THE BLACK SWORD



# MELNIBONÉ

BY

RICHARD WATTS

WITH

GEOFF GILLAN

PENELOPE LOVE

MARK MORRISON

BASED UPON THE **SOJOURNER'S GUIDE TO MELNIBONÉ**, AS COMPILED BY  
**THE DISORDERED SCRIBES OF THE LEAGUE OF TUMULTUOUS ERUDITION.**

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# CONTENTS

## BACKGROUND

INTRODUCTION.....	5
Richard Watts	
MELNIBONÉ.....	7
Richard Watts	
MELNIBONÉANS.....	31
Richard Watts	
COSMOLOGY.....	47
Richard Watts	
ENCOUNTERS ON MELNIBONÉ.....	52
Penelope Love and Richard Watts	
MELNIBONÉAN DIGEST.....	56
Richard Watts & Divers Hands	

## SCENARIOS

THE SOJOURNER'S GUIDE TO MELNIBONÉ.....	65
Geoff Gillan	
THE SUFFER GLASS.....	78
Geoff Gillan	
THE GHOST OF CITIES.....	102
Penelope Love	
INDEX.....	122
DRAGON & DEMON SHEET.....	124
MELNIBONÉAN CHARACTER SHEET.....	125
OTHER CHAOSIUM RELEASES.....	127

## WHEN IS MELNIBONÉ SET?

**THE EVENTS** of this book are set one year before the situations described in the novel *Elric of Melniboné* by Michael Moorcock. The Chaosium publications *Sorcerers of Pan Tang*, *Perils of the*

*Young Kingdoms*, and *Sea Kings of the Purple Towns* feature backgrounds and adventures set within this prologue period. The sack of Imrryr will be covered in a future *Elric* release.

DEDICATED WITH LOVE TO MY MOTHER, WHO SHOWED ME NEW WORLDS.  
— RICHARD WATTS

**Playtesters:** David Bland, Rhonda Gillan, Rebecca Heath, Martin Liedke, Trent Moses, Darrel Munro, David Munro, and Jason Rowlands.

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Michael Moorcock's works *Elric of Melniboné*, *The Sailor on the Seas of Fate*, *The Weird of the White Wolf*, *The Vanishing Tower*, *The Bane of the Black Sword*, *Stormbringer*, *The Fortress of the Pearl*, *Elric at the End of Time*, and *The Revenge of the Rose* are respectively copyright © 1963, 1964, 1965, 1967, 1970, 1972, 1976, 1977, 1984, 1989, 1991 by Michael Moorcock. Quotes have been made for purposes of illustration.

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It shows dragon-riders above a portion of the Dreaming City.

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Please do not phone in game questions; the quickest answer is often not the best answer.

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# INTRODUCTION

**F**OR 10,000 YEARS the Bright Empire of Melniboné ruled the world. The folk of Melniboné are not human, and their race is far older than humanity. They are powerful sorcerers, and magic comes to them as easy as breathing. In their heyday they forged unthinkable pacts with Demon Gods, shaped the elements and the lands to their liking, and tamed dragons and rode them to conquest across many worlds. Old age has dulled the Bright Empire, tarnished its proud beauty, and weakened its people; now the Dragon Princes of Melniboné conquer only in their drug-induced dreams, as their Empire rots from within. Even reduced to this crumbling introspection, they remain a great power among the upstart human nations which have sprung up around them in their dotage. Soon a new Emperor will come to the Ruby Throne. Whether he will bring the Bright Empire to glory or extinction is unknown, even in dreams.

Melniboné, Dragon Isle and Dreaming City contains background information for players and gamemasters alike, as well as scenarios for the gamemaster's eyes only. This book is an evocation of the moods and images of Melniboné, but does not claim to be an exhaustive rendering of every detail of the land. The Dragon Isle contains too much of marvel and wonder to ever be described so completely. Close attention has been paid to continuity with the books of Michael Moorcock. The author hopes that only in cases where Mr. Moorcock is himself contradictory will readers discover any anomaly with references as they appear in the Elric saga.

The chapter 'Melniboné' presents the history of Melnibonéans upon the world of the Young Kingdoms world, describing the great island of Melniboné and other places of note. Likewise the city of Imrryr, last bastion of the Bright Empire's glory, is presented historically and physically. Creatures living only on the Dragon Isle are also detailed in this chapter.

The second chapter, 'Melnibonéans', concerns the culture and traditions of that non-human race. Topics such as clothing and drugs are covered, as well as additional information for creating Melnibonéan adventurers. Descriptions and statistics for important residents of the Dreaming City occur in this chapter; these last differ in details from the rulesbook, where such characters appear at their most powerful or at their most representative to the Elric saga.

'Religion' explores Melnibonéan theology. The chapter discusses their beliefs concerning Chaos, the Balance, Law, the Elemental Rulers, and the Plant- and Beast-Lords.

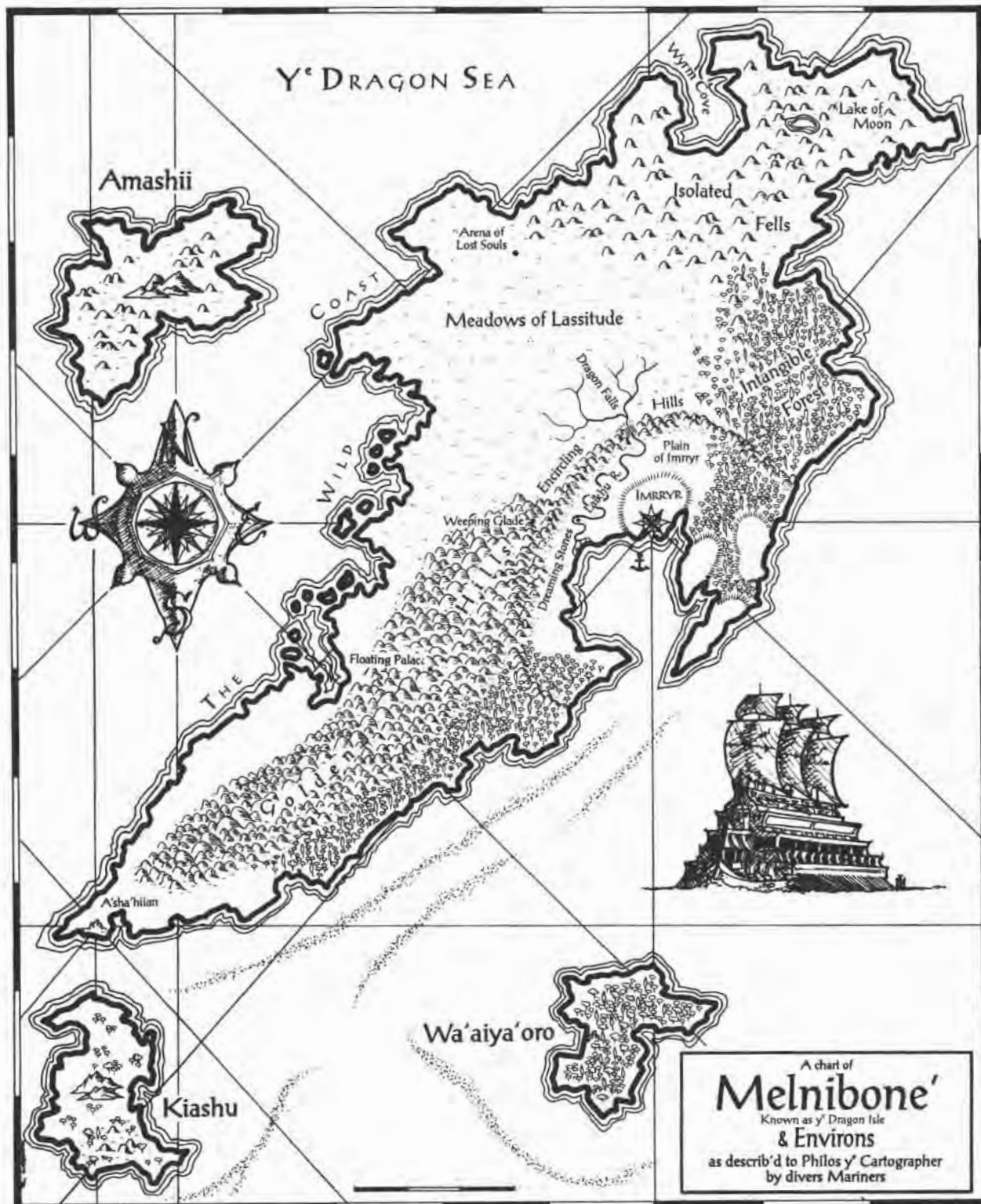
Encounter tables for Imrryr and for Melniboné as a whole are found in 'Encounters on Melniboné'.

The 'Melniboné Digest' contains a complete roster of statistics for Melnibonéan characters and creatures, large and small.

Following this background come three scenarios, 'The Sojourner's Guide to Melniboné', which sets the adventurers loose on the Isle, exploring it at the behest of a league of Chaos scholars; 'The Suffer Glass', which allows the adventurers to be present at a pivotal point in the Bright Empire's ancient history, and to take actions that will change that history; and 'The Ghost of Cities', which involves the adventurers in a Melnibonéan's search for her father, who is missing in spirit but not in body.



SADRIC THE EIGHTY-SIXTH,  
DYING EMPEROR OF MELNIBONÉ.





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# HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHY OF MELNIBONÉ

10,000 YEARS OF THE BRIGHT EMPIRE,  
THE DRAGON ISLE, DRAGONS, THE ISLANDS,  
THE DREAMING CITY, THE IMPERIAL PALACE

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**T**HIS CHAPTER discusses the land and legacy of Melniboné. The section 'History of the Bright Empire' recounts 10,000 years of Melniboné's history. Next, 'The Dragon Isle' describes the geography of Melniboné. The third section, 'Dragons', unveils those most impressive denizens of the isle. Three nearby islets are covered in 'The Islands'. 'The Dreaming City' depicts Imrryr, and lastly 'The Imperial Palace' plumbs the mysteries of the city's physical and spiritual heart.

## THE BRIGHT EMPIRE

**D**UE TO THE sheer age of Melniboné's civilization, not even its own scholars know all of Melniboné's origins. Given the tens of thousands of years in which the Dragon Isle has been populated, it has become impossible to distinguish myth and reality. The facts are few, and the legends contradictory. The reader may recall that not even Elric, the greatest sorcerer-scholar Imrryr had seen for an age, could be sure of the details of his empire's beginnings.

None can say from what distant corner of the multiverse those primal ancestors first sprang. The oldest legend of Melniboné, recorded in the *Gabbling Sphere*, speaks of that inhuman folk coming to this world as cosmic wanderers, fleeing from or pursued by some terrible catastrophe that had consumed their original plane. Certain passages hint darkly that the disaster was of their own creation.

In those long-distant days the proto-Melnibonéans served the Balance. Chaos would not yet reckon in their nature for many centuries. They already recognized the Elemental Rulers and Beast- and Plant-Lords as essential to the multiverse, but did not worship them. These young and vibrant aliens were a non-violent people, although the rituals of warfare were part of their heritage.

## A NEW WORLD

**T**WELVE THOUSAND years ago the proto-Melnibonéans arrived on the world which would one day include the Young Kingdoms. These tall, slender folk swore to flee no more. Scattered across the earth when they arrived, they slowly migrated toward a central place, there to begin their new lives. Their new home was a world only recently drastically reshaped by a war between the Elemental Rulers.

Formed by Chaos, although no longer ruled by it, the earth was a rawer, brighter world then. To an inhuman people who had wandered from world to world across the Million Spheres, this new home was a beauty and a delight. Their original settlement, A'sha'hian, "The First City," lay at the southern tip of an island they would later call Melniboné. The island itself was formed during the Elemental Wars, and had once been the peaks of a mountain range overlooking the Oldest Ocean.

## R'LIN K'REN A'A

Although many gathered at A'sha'hian over the centuries, some colonies remained where they first set foot upon their new plane. Such a group founded the city later called R'lin K'ren A'a. They were isolated there for many centuries, and bred with a bestial race. They became debased and primitive. Two thousand years after its foundation they were driven out of R'lin K'ren A'a by Duke Arioch of Chaos, at a time when Melniboné was beginning a new and magical age.

## THE OLDER ONES, AND OTHERS

**A**N ANCIENT AND inhuman Lawful race already dwelt upon this world, although their civilization was in decline. Time has obscured their name. Legends speak of them as the Older Ones, quasi-immortals who might die only through accident or violence. They had sprung up in the world after the last Time Cycle, when the Doomed Folk had half-destroyed the world and obliterated their own civilization. As the Older Ones' society aged and weakened, it became unable to hold off the increasingly strong attacks, led

by the terrible Duke Darnizhaan, that Chaos made against the earth. The Older Ones welcomed the proto-Melnibonéans to the world, hoping they would help defend against Chaos. The noble houses of the two races intermarried, and exchanged gifts and knowledge.

Other non-human races also then inhabited the world. The dwellers in the Silent Land lived as they still do, within the borders of their barren country and having little to do with the outside world. This evil and isolated race would never become part of the Bright Empire, nor would Melniboné ever attempt to conquer them. The Winged Folk of Myyrrhn, lately evolved from the bestial clakers and related in some way to the inhuman residents of the Silent Land, were also a small nation at this time. Over the millennia the Bright Empire would see the Myyrrhn nation grow and wane again before Melniboné began her own decline.

The only other inhuman race recorded by Melniboné's scribes (who take only a passing interest in those the Empire succeeded, and even less in those it destroys) were the Nihrain, who were to wake periodically during the Bright Empire's reign, often aiding Melniboné.

## THE RUNESWORDS

Among the objects which the Older Ones placed in the hands of Melniboné's great were two swords, forged from the stuff of Chaos by Lawful weaponsmiths, and intended to fight Chaos. So powerful were the runeswords Stormbringer and Mournblade that they could slay the very Lords of Chaos themselves. But the Older Ones hid the true nature and purpose of the runeswords. The gifts of these swords, and their Chaotic influence upon the successive generations, began the corruption of those whose descendants would be Melnibonéans. At first the leaders of Melniboné sought to hide the battle-lust the swords evoked, but soon they revelled in it.

## THE CHAOS WARS

ONE HUNDRED YEARS after the arrival of the proto-Melnibonéans, Chaos came with all its strength against the forces of Law and those of the Balance who defended them. A time of madness and horror crossed the world. Many warriors of pre-Melniboné fell in battle against Duke Darnizhaan's Chaos hordes.

One Champion of the Balance quested for the Ship Which Sails Over Land And Sea, so that he might voyage across the planes to bring dragons to join the fray. Though he succeeded,

Chaos was not defeated until the two Black Swords were carried into battle. In fear of those swords, Darnizhaan and many of his fellow Chaos Lords gave up their substance, hurling their lifestuff into Eternity in an attempt at immortality. In time they would become known as the Dead Gods but, unless killed by the runeswords, even Dead Gods would never truly die.

## THE DEATH OF THE OLDER ONES

The Black Swords proved treacherous. Those Older Ones who could still fight had taken to the battlefield, and the runeswords turned their wielders' hands against those who had forged them, slaying the Older Ones in the frenzy of battle. Those few Older Ones who survived were the scholars of their race, and thus were not on the field of battle. Within decades they had died of grief, and the Older Ones were no more. Rather than stay in A'sha'hiiian, now a memorial to the dead, the people founded a new settlement. H'hui'shan it was called, "The City of the Island." The island itself was renamed Melniboné. Any Older One name it had is lost to us.

## FORGING AN EMPIRE

WITH CHAOS BANISHED, the Melnibonéans could explore their new world. The love and honor Melnibonéans held for nature when they served the Balance allowed them to forge psychic bonds with the dragons, those beasts drawn from another world to help them against Chaos. Like the Black Swords, the dragons were creatures of Chaos, and over the next few centuries something of their nature began to appear in those who rode them. The dragons' wild spirits and greedy senses at first blended with their riders only in flight. Soon, however, the strange dark emotions became a permanent part of the dragon-warriors' personalities, and began to appear in their children.

As well as the Chaotic influence of the dragons, the baneful aura of the Black Swords, now wielded by the most savage of Melniboné's Dragon Princes, made itself felt. Gradually the untamed and vengeful spirit of Chaos became part of the spirit of Melniboné.

When other would-be conquerors rose up to threaten the peace of their world, the dragon-riders were the first to fight them back. Over the following centuries these defensive battles became offensive. The dragon-warriors were in the thick of these battles, and they became the most powerful of Melniboné's nobility in a new social order. From a nation of peaceful folk serving the Cosmic Balance, circumstance and Fate conspired to make Melniboné a warlike nation of amoral, inhuman conquerors. Humanity did not yet exist upon the world, and the few other non-human nations were no match for Melniboné's arts of war. One by one they fell. This was ten thousand years ago, and the age of the Bright Empire had begun.

## THE RETURN OF CHAOS

After centuries of fighting, Melniboné had conquered the world. Because the Cosmic Balance would forbid them expansion of the Empire to make conquests upon other worlds, certain heretical nobles suggested that Melniboné should ally with Chaos instead. Under the aegis of Chaos, Melniboné would find endless conquests and limitless fascinations.

## FROM THE SILVER GRIMOIRE

**A**S CENTURIES passed, the flames of Chaos that had fanned the Bright Empire's splendid heart became diminished, and with them the courage and sweet fancies of her Emperors. Remembering the lust with which the Black Swords hungered for the souls of those who forged them long ago, their later owners feared the swords, and sought release from the rune-carved hellblades. Finally the Black Swords were seized by the Lords of the Higher Worlds and then hidden amongst the infinite worlds of possibility.



Thus the desire for further conquests surpassed the limits of the natural world, and bred great dissension within Melniboné. Civil war broke out between those who favored Chaos (most often the young, who had already been influenced by it) and the old breed of Melnibonéans, who were still faithful to the Balance. For three days battle raged across Melniboné and the Bright Empire. H'hui'shan was destroyed, and many Melnibonéans died or fled rather than treat with Chaos. These refugees scattered to other planes and across the face of the world. Those who favored Chaos were triumphant.

Duke Arioch of Chaos supplanted the worship of the Cosmic Balance on Melniboné. As patron of the Dragon Isle, he was more demanding but also a far more active deity.

It was at this time that the Lords of the Higher Worlds met at R'lin K'ren A'a, driving forth its inhabitants. Some of the degenerate people of R'lin K'ren A'a fled to the Sorcerer's Isle, where they later died. Storms carried still others as far as the Dragon Isle, where their arrival was greeted with horror, and all were executed. So confused is the history of Melniboné that certain sources, for reasons of their own, claim that the half-breeds of R'lin K'ren A'a actually founded the Dragon Isle. This legend is most common in the Young Kingdoms, where it may have begun when humanity's primeval ape-like ancestors encountered the migrations of that devolved people.

## RECORDED HISTORY

**T**HE EARLIEST WRITTEN records of Melniboné survive from the time Duke Arioch of Chaos became patron of the Isle. Melniboné was weakened by the civil war, and many of the non-human subject nations rose up and attacked her. Ferocious magicks laid waste to several, convincing all of the sorcerous might now at the Bright Empire's disposal.

### THE GOLDEN AGE

The prestige and power of magic began to absorb the people of Melniboné, who slowly abandoned their engineering and architectural ingenuity in favor of sorcery. The city of Imrryr was the last great technical marvel Melnibonéans wrought before magic overcame them totally. Over a hundred years after the destruction of H'hui'shan, Imrryr was built where The City of the Island had fallen. An inspired city of towers and spires, a marvel of masonry and stone, Imrryr was to be both testimony to the age of the Balance that had passed, and Melniboné's new dawn of Chaos, conquest, and sorcery.

The use of sorcery became entirely natural to Melnibonéans, whose inhuman minds were perfectly suited to its exercise. Pacts were sworn between the Bright Empire and the Elemental Rulers and Beast- and Plant-Lords. Dragons sailed through the skies of a dozen different worlds. Fleets of hundreds of battle barges floated across the oceans of this world and beyond. Century followed century with no sign of the Bright Empire ever diminishing. It was a time of wonder and glory, of interplanar conquest and unbridled Chaos unleashed upon a hundred worlds.

**"T**HE LIGHT OF THE EARLY MORNING touched the tall towers of Imrryr and made them scintillate. Each tower was of a different hue; there were a thousand soft colours. There were rose pinks and pollen yellows, there were purples and pale greens, mauves and browns and oranges, hazy blues, whites and powdery golds, all lovely in the sunlight."

— ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ

### INTROSPECTION AND ENNUI

On Melniboné the Emperors increasingly gathered power to themselves. Where once the people met in forum and parliament to discuss and direct Melniboné's course, now the Emperor came to be supreme, and unchallenged decrees issued from the Ruby Throne.

Denied the chance to act for the good of Melniboné, the people grew uninclined to act at all, and became more dependent on their slaves. Although they now could not survive without them, Melnibonéans hid their slaves away, lest the sight of them offend sensibilities grown inhumanly delicate. Perhaps jaded by exposure to the Higher Worlds, perhaps sapped of curiosity by continued use of magicks, Melnibonéans now turned to their dreams for pleasure. Always a contemplative race, they became increasingly absorbed by inner mysteries, avoiding the outside world. Drugs fueled their inner visions. Drugs also controlled their slave populations, once of inhuman prisoners, by now increasingly of human stock. From this time, four thousand years ago, Imrryr became known as the Dreaming City.

### THE BEGINNING OF THE END

At the height of her power, Melniboné's people could reshape entire nations for their momentary pleasure. The world of the Young Kingdoms was their plaything. Chaos had made Melnibonéans cruel and amoral, and as centuries passed it seemed that they had always been so. Engrossed in their sorceries and other-worldly conquests, the Melnibonéans did not notice what was happening to their race. The quest for more triumphs, further novelties and new experience had blinded Melniboné to the world around her.

Meanwhile human races had evolved upon the earth. At first no better than beasts, exposure to Melniboné and her people pushed humanity up the road to civilization. All was slavery and exploitation to start.

The first nomadic tribes of hunter-gatherers traded at the outskirts of Melnibonéan colonies a little over four thousand years ago. Here they learned to grow crops from their non-human masters. Human towns developed, as did the benefits which accompany towns. The first human civilization was Quarzhasaat, in what is today the Sighing Desert. It was not recognized as an advanced nation by the Melnibonéans.

Over the following centuries the humans spread in swarms across the world. The nation of Quarzhasaat declared itself an Empire two millennia ago, an event which caused no little astonishment in Imrryr. That animals might have such pretensions was a topic of some amusement to the Melnibonéans, even more so when the Quarzhasaatim's own sorcerers destroyed their Empire by drowning it in sand. (They had meant to destroy an invading Melnibonéan army instead.)

The last known awakening of the Nihrain was at this time, and perhaps they assisted in Quarzhasaat's downfall. Once this brief human joke had been played out, Melniboné resumed her all-consuming torpor.

## THE DHARZI EMPIRE

The Dharzi were the last of the non-human nations to threaten the Bright Empire. They became prominent some three thousand years ago. It has been suggested that the Beastfolk, as the Dharzi are sometimes known, were a Melnibonéan experiment that went wrong. Regardless of their origin, the Dharzi nation grew rapidly in size and might. Their animal sorceries and potent worship of the Beast-Lords rapidly elevated them to rival Melniboné. Two aggressive, expansionist empires could not co-exist, and so a thousand years ago war broke out between the Dharzi and the folk of the Dragon Isle.

Unlike any battle which the Bright Empire had previously fought, this one seriously threatened Melniboné. The powerful Dharzi Empire was almost her equal. Huge magicks unleashed by both sides swept across and in some places reshaped the world. The mighty spells which the best sorcerers of the Dragon Isle desperately cast were, in the end, effective. Old bargains Melniboné had made with the Beast-Lords decisively weakened the Dharzi, but not without cost. Melniboné defeated her enemy at the expense of her own strength.

The greatest catastrophe was the eruption of a northern volcano due to a wild surge of magic. Huge tidal waves swept across the Pale and the Dragon Seas, and a rift was torn between the planes. This cataclysm delivered the Mabden to the shattered isle they would rename Pan Tang. But finally the Dharzi were blasted into extinction.

The soul-draining runes Melniboné employed to destroy her enemies also killed or mindblasted a generation of her own sorcerers. Having also sustained crippling losses of warriors, Melniboné was fatally weakened.

For five hundred years the Bright Empire struggled on. Some would call them her death struggles. Although her decline upon the Young Kingdoms plane did not begin for some centuries, Melniboné now began to lose her dominions on foreign planes, one by one. Soon it would be as if they had never existed.

## THE RISE OF THE YOUNG KINGDOMS

FIVE CENTURIES AGO Melniboné's control over the human populations of the world began to slip. Melnibonéans patronizingly referred to these nations as *the Young Kingdoms*, in mocking contrast with Melniboné's ancient power. Now fewer and fewer battle-barges were seen upon the waves, Melnibonéan births declined, and outlying Melnibonéan settlements were abandoned. The dragons began to fail in numbers, as fewer and fewer eggs were laid each year. Even the Lords of Chaos seemed to lose interest; magic became increasingly difficult to employ, and spells lost their potency or went awry.

During this period the machinations of the human sorceress and servant of Law, Myshella of Kaneloon, were no doubt responsible for many of Melniboné's troubles. The patterns of order in the rituals and liturgies Melnibonéans had created around Chaos had, unwittingly, already weakened Chaos to an extent; now humanity's Church of Law further increased the

stability and structure of a world once ruled by the Lords of Entropy. A Lawful barrier was constructed about the earth, preventing the Dukes of Chaos ever fully ruling this plane, and indeed it gradually reduced their influence upon it.

(At the time of Elric, the Lords of Chaos cannot or will not be contacted because of this barrier, and have not manifested upon the earth for a great number of years. It is Elric, greatest sorcerer of his age, who will create an opening through this barrier by his summoning of Arioch in *Elric of Melniboné*. This same barrier will one day be torn open by the insane Theocrat of Pan Tang, as described in the novel *Stormbringer*, allowing Chaos free reign upon the earth.)

If they could be freed from the oppression of the Bright Empire, the human nations could grow and prosper. Lornyr was first to declare itself independent, throwing off the Melnibonéan yoke four hundred years ago. Led by the renowned hero Earl Aubec of Malador, the armies of humanity triumphed in a decisive battle against Melnibonéan forces ill-prepared for war and arrogantly ignorant of their challengers. Lornyr, ruled by Queen Eloarde, soon conquered all of the newly independent Southlands, with Aubec leading her armies on to triumph after triumph.

Across the world, nations rose and fell. Once the ships of Melniboné had come to them to plunder and steal, claiming the right of tribute; now merchants of the Young Kingdoms went to Imrryr, there to trade for the wondrous goods which only Melniboné could provide. From a martial power, Melniboné became a mercantile one. By the time of Elric, this trade alone keeps Melniboné alive.

## CURRENT HISTORY

ALTHOUGH ONLY IMRRYR remains of the once-great cities of the Bright Empire, this last stronghold is by no means weak. The much-reduced fleet of golden battle-barges rarely sail upon the seas, but it brings fire and inevitable destruction to upstart lordlings and brigands who dare to attack the Dreaming City. The dragons which slumber in deep caverns may be less numerous than they once were, but when roused the fury of their inflammable venom is just as potent. Protected by these forces, and believing themselves unassailable, Melnibonéans still view themselves as the rightful masters of the Young Kingdoms.

### MELNIBONÉ TODAY

Melniboné's decline in strength has been matched by a decline in spirit, and the populace of the Dreaming City no longer venture far from their glittering towers. Every pleasure they need is found within Imrryr's walls. Those which are not made there are brought to them, by slaves or by human merchants pitifully eager for trade. Although humans fear and despise Melnibonéans, they are eager for the wealth Melniboné holds.

Greed brings merchants and sailors to Imrryr, risking the dangers of the sea maze to land and trade in the harbor. Great volumes of regulations control humanity's access to Imrryr, and those who break those rules, even unknowingly, are imprisoned, tortured, and enslaved.

The price is high, yet the thousands of merchants who visit Melniboné each year apparently believe it to be one worth risking. Some pirates, perceiving Melniboné enfeebled, come not to trade but to plunder. They are met with the same scorn with which Melnibonéans treat all humanity, and with fire and steel also.





THE GOLDEN BATTLE-BARGES OF MELNIBONÉ.

Such is the heritage of the Bright Empire that the folk of the Dragon Isle cannot conceive of a world not under their dominion. Like a parent blinded to offsprings' new-found independence, Melniboné has yet to realize that the Young Kingdoms have matured. Isolated from humanity and their rapid development, Melnibonéans have become an anachronism, outdated and decaying from within.

The current Emperor is Sadric the Eighty-Sixth, 427th Sorcerer-Emperor to sit upon the Ruby Throne. The line is unbroken since a ruler of the Bright Empire first served Chaos. Like the nation which he has ruled for half a century, Sadric is an Emperor in decline. Since the death of his Empress some 20 years ago Sadric has given himself over to mourning, ignoring his realm and indeed his surroundings almost entirely. He is consumed by sorrow, and cares little for the activities of his court, ruling over them in name only. It is many years since the Emperor has exercised his Imperial will, and in that time Melniboné has slipped further into decay. Melniboné is carried forward only by the momentum of her traditions. Without them, what is left of the Bright Empire would crumble and die.

Although their heresies are unspoken, there are those in the Dreaming City who see Sadric as unfit to rule, weak, apathetic, and uncaring. These individuals hope that when Sadric's albino son Elric gains the Ruby Throne, he will usher in a glorious new age of conquest and power. Omens and prophecy have forecast that Elric is to be the greatest sorcerer

Melniboné has seen for five hundred years. Others wonder how such a sickly child could ever amount to anything.

As it happens, Elric does indeed lead Melniboné into a new age, but not a glorious one. Within the space of a few short years he destroys what remains of the Bright Empire, forever.

## FUTURE EVENTS

**M**ELNIBONÉ'S LONG AND glorious history is soon to come crashing down. Her destruction is still a few years away yet, and in those fleeting years drama, death, romance, hue and cry, and dire sorcery will rise up about the Ruby Throne.

► **AT THE GAMEMASTER'S DISCRETION**, the Emperor Sadric dies and Elric takes the Ruby Throne.

► **THREE MONTHS AFTER ELRIC'S ACCESSION**, Prince Yyrkoon and his supporters urge the Emperor to move against the increasingly powerful Isle of Purple Towns, claiming that nation of shopkeepers are denuding Imrryr of her rightful trade. Rumors sweep the Foreign Quarter that all human visitors to the Dreaming City are to be seized or executed, and that dragons are being readied to fly to and destroy the Purple Towns. Emperor Elric refuses to take action against the Isle, stating that to take offense over mere finances is un-Melnibonéan. Prince Yyrkoon suffers a small loss of face over this incident.

➤ **EIGHT MONTHS LATER**, a small fleet of Vilmirian privateers sails against Melniboné, and at Yyrkoon's urging they are destroyed utterly with dragon venom. Waking the dragons for this petty attack prevents Melniboné from sending dragons against the Dorelite raiders who attack Melniboné four months later.

➤ **ONE YEAR LATER**, Prince Yyrkoon's ambition gets the better of him during a sea battle against pirates from Dorel, and he attempts to drown Elric and by treachery gain the Ruby Throne. His actions discovered, Yyrkoon seizes Cymoril and flees the Dragon Isle. Thousands of soldiers are sent forth to scour the world, with no success. It is many months before all of the searchers return to Imrryr. In desperation Elric turns to Arioch, and swears fealty to him. Arioch reveals that Yyrkoon is in hiding in Oin and Yu. Using the Ship Which Sails Over Land and Sea, Elric travels to Oin, defeats his renegade cousin, and wakes Cymoril from a sorcerous sleep. Elric also acquires the lost runesword Stormbringer, and the tragic drama of the albino Emperor's destiny begins to unfold.

These events are described in detail in Michael Moorcock's *Elric of Melniboné*.

➤ **AFTER ONE YEAR AND FIVE MONTHS**, Elric leaves the Ruby Throne, installing his cousin Yyrkoon as regent while he roams the world for twelve months. The albino Emperor journeys first to the Isle of Purple Towns, then from there on to Jadmar, Bakshaan, Ufych-Sormeer, lost Quarzhasaat in the Sighing Desert, Filkhar, Argimiliar, and Pikarayd, before being swept up in an adventure involving the Blind Captain and his mysterious ship (see *The Sailor on the Seas of Fate*).

➤ **TWO YEARS FROM ELRIC'S ACCESSION**, Yyrkoon's ambition undoes him once more. He forges documents purporting to prove Elric's death and declares himself Emperor, the first to so rule from the Ruby Throne without the Ring of Kings. An ancient prophecy foretells doom for Melniboné should such an act ever occur. His sister, the Princess Cymoril, fights against Yyrkoon's deeds, and to silence her, he once more casts her into an ensorcelled sleep.

➤ **SIX MONTHS AFTER THAT**, the Sack of Imrryr takes place. Elric discovers Yyrkoon's fresh treachery upon returning to the Purple Towns with his new-found friend Count Smiorgan Baldhead. Elric makes temporary alliance among the Young Kingdoms' naval powers, and a fleet of over a thousand war galleys sails for Melniboné, bringing grim-faced reavers to loot, slay, and burn.

Black-hearted Yyrkoon dies upon the blade of Stormbringer, but not before he causes Cymoril to be accidentally slain by Elric. Imrryr is destroyed, and the reavers sail away, fat with loot. However, the dragons are awakened, and the victorious raiders die beneath the flames of the Dragon Isle's final, fiery breath.

**"THEY SPURRED THEIR** steeds through the sun-speared wood and up the steep sides of the hill beyond, racing down the other side and away across a plain where noidel bushes grew, their lush, poison fruit glimmering a purplish blue, a night-colour which even the light of day could not disperse. There were many such peculiar berries and herbs on Melniboné and it was to some of them that Elric owed his life. Others were used for sorcerous potions and had been sown centuries before by Elric's ancestors. Now few Melnibonéans left Imrryr even to collect these harvests. Only slaves visited the greater part of the island...."

— ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ

Count Smiorgan, and the kings of Jharkor, Lormyr, Tarkesh, Vilmir, and Argimiliar are killed in the Sack of Imrryr, throwing their countries into turmoil and precipitating the Doom of the World in years to come.

## THE DRAGON ISLE

**MELNIBONÉ COMPRISES** one large island and three lesser isles. It was formed 20,000 years ago, when the Elemental Lords Grome and Straasha fought. The world was reshaped by their struggle, which tore open a mighty rift through the mountains at the edge of the Oldest Ocean. As the ocean flooded eastward, the peaks of those mountains became the islands known today as the Melnibonéan archipelago. The central island is Melniboné. The other three are Amashii, Kiashu, and Wa'aiya'oro.

Although all four Melnibonéan islands were home to inhuman and beautiful Melnibonéans at the height of the Bright Empire's power, the outer three are now largely abandoned. Upon the main island only one city, Imrryr, remains populated. Countless towns and country villas were deserted as the Melnibonéans lost interest in the physical world, turning to the solace of their drug-induced pleasures and visions. Imrryr alone retains the glory of the Bright Empire, and even there such glory consists largely of dreams.

## CLIMATE

**C**RADLED BETWEEN WARM currents from the Boiling Sea and the colder waters of the Dragon Sea, Melniboné's climate is stable across the island, although not without local variation. The seasons are distinct. Wet and humid summers are the norm, temperatures in the south sometimes rising to uncomfortable extremes. Autumn brings a burst of color to the island, the many softwood trees flushing with glorious reds, oranges, and golds before their leaves fall. Winters are cold and dry, with crisp clear mornings and days of weak sunshine. Snow is uncommon except upon the higher northern grounds of the Isolated Fells, and then only on the coldest of days. Spring is the gentlest time of year, with fields of flowers blossoming everywhere across Melniboné. High rainfall (40 to 60 inches a year) encourages lush plant growth. The winds of the Dragon Sea are unpredictable, often bringing storms and strong rains to the northern coasts. The southern coasts receive warm, gentle winds, mists, and light but regular rains from the distant Boiling Sea.

Due to the many sorcerers dwelling upon Melniboné, the island's weather does not always have the chance to be average. Should a garden party be held, fine weather would be required, and thus spells are worked to keep the skies clear. A mage can just as easily summon elementals to bring storms and rain. Because of this, actual conditions upon the Dragon Isle are variable to an extreme. It is possible for the Plain of Imrryr to bask in sunshine while thick fogs blanket the Golden Hills and storms sweep the nearby Meadows of Lassitude.



## GEOGRAPHY

**M**ELNIBONÉ PROPER, the main island, is some 375 miles long, and about 150 miles across at its widest. Though it was always a beautiful land, constant habitation transformed Melniboné into a verdant gem. In the last five hundred years those who tended the Dragon Isle lost interest in the lands outside Imrryr. In that time Melniboné has grown wild, a huge garden whose beauty is newly freed from the constraints of its inhuman gardeners.

### THE WILD COAST

The northern coast of Melniboné, the Wild Coast, is a rough coastline of cliffs, rocks, and small shingle beaches. Safe landing sites are few and far between. The Dragon Sea, north of Melniboné, is a well-known home to sea-serpents. A cold and violent sea rages against the northern cliffs. Many would-be pirates have been wrecked along the Wild Coast, their hulls torn open by rocks hidden below the waterline or smashed against the towering cliffs by contrary currents and savage winds. Wise mariners avoid the area, unless their boats are protected by powerful charms.

### THE SOUTHERN SHORES

Melniboné's southern beaches are of clear white sands, alternating with low cliffs and soft hills. They are bathed by warm, sometimes steaming currents from the Boiling Sea. Here and there are small stretches of tidal mangrove swamp. Crabs, mudskippers, and a variety of other creatures can be found here, including some crocodiles, whose numbers have lately increased after teetering on the edge of extinction. Coral reefs grow in the shallow seas, navigable only where the fresh waters of the Lalkhu River flow out from the Imrryrian Bay. Closer to shore are a number of craggy islets, miniature mountains whose jagged faces are home to many types of seabirds. The southern waters boast a variety of marine life, providing much variety for the banquet tables of the Dreaming City. Mists along Melniboné's southern beaches are common, especially on spring and autumn mornings, rolling in from the sea and blanketing the countryside.

### THE ISOLATED FELS

Although it has no mountains, over half of Melniboné is hilly and extremely rocky. The Isolated Fells, the most ragged, lie at the extreme north of Melniboné. The ocean has long worn down and even part-swallowed what once were high mountain peaks. Empty and desolate by Imrryrian standards, the Isolated Fells are home to many wonders. The Dragon Isle's once-rich gold, copper, and tin mines are here, as are quarries for granite, quartz, and marble. There is little coastal plain in this part of the island, and the seas offshore are extremely deep. The terrain consists of granite crags and outcroppings, slashed here and there by white streams rushing to the sea.

Blanketed by bracken, heather, and long rustling grasses, the Isolated Fells are the coldest part of Melniboné, exposed to the full fury of the Dragon Sea. Snow sometimes falls on the highest hills in winter. Small upland lakes are dotted throughout the Fells, their still waters dark and surprisingly deep. Here also grow occasional scattered woodlands of fir, spruce, beech, and pine, the evergreens standing out against the bare and black branches of the deciduous softwoods in winter.

### THE ENCIRCLING HILLS

A range of steep hills rings the Plain of Imrryr. In ancient times these were sand dunes, and marked the edge of the original island. They have long since compacted into shale and been covered in wind-blown soil. Many grasses grow on the hills, whispering in the wind alongside gorse and great fields of flowers. Few trees grow here, except in the lower hills to the southeast, as their deep-questing roots soon outstretch the thin soil to the sands and rock below. Some hardy pines and conifers are found near the foothills. Shrubs survive although even they are often thin and spindly.

Wandering the Encircling Hills today, one may find seashells many miles from the sea. The shells are always turned to stone, perhaps touched by Grome's rage in the time when he warred with Straasha the sea-king.

### THE GOLDEN HILLS

The Golden Hills are the gentlest of Melniboné's upland country, in the south of the island. These slopes and valleys were among the first areas of the Dragon Isle populated by the Melnibonéans, and many abandoned estates exist here. A narrow plain skirts the coast, beaches of white sand giving way to green lawns and shady dells. Lower stretches of the coast are somewhat swampy, with patches of mangroves growing amidst the thick mud.

The Golden Hills receive the highest rainfall of any part of Melniboné except for Kiashu. Storms from the Dragon Sea and mists and rain from the Boiling Sea ensure riotous plant growth. The northern reaches of the hills are scattered with thickets of bamboo and rhododendron. Temperate rainforest blankets the southern reaches. One can wander for hours among the lush ferns and orchids. Tall softwood and hardwood trees stretch their branches in a green canopy which blocks out the sun. A tangle of lianas and vines grow suspended from them. Common trees include fig trees, broad-leafed rubber trees, towering cedars, and flowering cherry trees. Camphor trees abound, their evergreen leaves and timber impregnated with aromatic oil.

### MEADOWS OF LASSITUDE

Central Melniboné consists of a large plateau, the Meadows of Lassitude, extending from the sea-cliffs of the Wild Coast east to the balmy southern sea. Situated between three ranges of hills, the Meadows of Lassitude are a rolling grassy plain, named because of the many soporific herbs found here. These include blossoms, flowers, blooms, leaves, bark, shrubs, fungi, and mosses. From these fields the Melnibonéans extract the drugs with which they pass their idle days.

The undulating miles of heath, bog, grassy plain, and scattered trees which make up the Meadows of Lassitude seem largely natural, a testament to the skills of the countless landscapers and garden-slaves who have toiled here over the centuries. Reshaped to aesthetic as well as ecological demands, the Meadows are an endless vista of serenity and peace. Grassy downs, babbling brooks in steep-sided stony valleys, small stands of slender white-trunked birch trees trembling in the breeze, the gleam of sunlight off fen waters where slow carp swim among the rushes, every arcadian idyll one could desire is here. Once Emperors held court amid the greenwood and dewed grass, and nobles dined by streams beneath the moon. Now only slaves come, bidden by their masters to collect the harvests and thereby further spur the fantasies and visions of the Dreaming City.

**"THE TURF WAS CROSSED** by trails (Elric) had known as a boy. He trod them as surely as he had done when, he recollected, his father—distant upon a charger—called to some servitor to take care with the child but to let him walk. He must grow up to remember every pathway that existed in Melniboné; for in those trails and tracks, those roads and highs, lay the configuration of their history, the geometry of their wisdom, the very key to their most secret understandings."

—THE REVENGE OF THE ROSE

Many of the drug-yielding and pharmaceutical plants were introduced from elsewhere in the Young Kingdoms. The Meadows have been reshaped to favor many environments, such as the complex of artificial wetlands that is home to a variety of birds and aquatic life. Some imported plants thrive in the Meadows in greater profusion than found nowadays in their original habitat.

## PLAIN OF IMRRYR

The Plain of Imrryr extends from the Encircling Hills to the sea, stretching its fields of green turf, crops, and orchards in a patchwork carpet about the Dreaming City. These are farmlands, tended by drug-addicted garden-slaves who spend their lives weeding, hoeing, and harvesting. Staples include rice, wheat, and corn. Fruits include apples, oranges, peaches, and grapes. Herds of cattle and sheep graze under the slaves' watchful eyes. Many delicately perfumed flowers also grow upon the plain, as do scattered clumps of trees.

The rushing waters of the Lalkhu River spring from the Encircling Hills, meandering across the green sward to join the Bay of Imrryr. Vast and cool, the river's waters irrigate much of the farmlands in a glittering network of canals and flooded fields. Its banks are lined with rushes and weeping willows. White lilies nod on the cool, dark water in the river's slower stretches. The Lalkhu wildlife includes white cranes, kingfishers, otters, and dragonflies.

## THE INTANGIBLE FOREST

When thick sea-fogs roll through this forest, they obscure the tree trunks so that leaves and branches seem to float wraith-like above the ground. Thousands of years ago the Intangible Forest was a small plantation near the shore where Melnibonéans could glide amongst the trees, reveling in the forest's beauty. Trees in the oldest part of the forest are unnaturally ordered, positioned where they would be most aesthetically pleasing. With the passing years the forest has slowly grown, and natural disorder has extended the forest's borders.

Cool and damp, the Intangible Forest is a haven for those seeking relief from the humid summer heat. An emerald carpet of moss covers much of the forest floor, dappled with green-tinged light where the sun penetrates the thick, leafy canopy. There are over a hundred varieties of moss, soft, springy, and mostly untrodden. There are parts of the forest which have never been seen by a living Melnibonéan, and steep-sided valleys where the sun never shines, so thick grow the trees overhead. There are maples, their leaves changing to fiery reds and oranges in autumn. Slender birch trees become invisible when the winter fogs come, until they seem to be

nothing more than a fallen tree's dream of life. Flowering cherries scatter pink and white petals across the moss in springtime. Graceful willows overhang narrow, twisting streams. Chestnuts add their hoary branches to the rustling canopy. There are gnarled oaks and pines where the forest grows south across the Encircling Hills. Flowering shrubs such as azaleas and rhododendron grow here also. Occasional glades boast fields of bluebells, daffodils, snowdrops, and crocuses, all raising their blossoms to greet the sun.

## GEOMANTIC CONFIGURATIONS

**T**HE SIMPLE FOLK of the Young Kingdoms believe Melniboné to be haunted. Stories are told of sailors landing on Melniboné, only to vanish into thin air as they marched along some rutted track. Imrryr's dreaming residents know that Melniboné is a mystic land, its esoteric wisdom encoded into a complex pattern of ley-lines and pathways which crisscross the island. Standing stones, alone or sometimes elaborately grouped, mark these occult pathways. Lichen obscures many of the ancient carvings engraved upon these grey and weathered megaliths. Some lines follow the path of a normal road, but others cut across the trackless hills. This network of lines and stones is encoded with Melniboné's deepest secrets and mysteries, established at the turn of ages when Imrryr's people swore allegiance to Chaos.

If a full-blooded Melnibonéan, walking these pathways lays down in the walker's mind the possibilities and capabilities of magic and sorcery. Among other things, it confers upon them the ability to summon the Beast Lords. For young Melnibonéan sorcerers, it replaces the years of meditation and rigorous training humans must go through to discipline their minds so that they may use magic. Often the week or so it takes to "walk the bounds" is the only time a Melnibonéan leaves Imrryr in this day and age. Should a Melnibonéan initiate not walk these awakening pathways, he or she must study to learn the magical arts, as do mundane human sorcerers. Even so, such a Melnibonéan would progress far more swiftly than any human scholar.

Heirs to the Ruby Throne undertake a trek around Melniboné's pathways and beyond, to instill in them a proper sense of the purity of their land.

Other roads exist upon the Dragon Isle which lead to other worlds. These gateways can be triggered with suitable gestures and songs. Along these roads Melniboné once marched her armies to invade and conquer nearby planes, returning with vast wealth to enrich the Bright Empire. Humans who have sought to invade the Dragon Isle are often dispatched by activating a path the hapless humans have chosen to follow, leading them all unknowing to another world. Without the correct sorceries there is no way back. Some of these magical roads lead to unintended worlds, and some routes do not work at all. The magic which operates many of them has gone awry over the years, the wisdom of the ancients irreparable by the lethargic Melnibonéans of today.





## PLACES OF NOTE

**B**ELOW ARE DESCRIBED a variety of locales upon the Dragon Isle. This is by no means an exhaustive list, and gamemasters are urged to create new places and expand upon those given here.

### THE ARENA OF LOST SOULS

Three day's ride north of Imrryr, amidst the undulating fields of the Meadows of Lassitude, rear the stones of an ancient arena. The fluted walls and flying buttresses are grey and lichen-stained, and overgrown with rustling growths of clinging ivy. From over the walls come sporadic, dreadful roars and wailings, all the more horrid for the fact that Melnibonéan throats emit such sounds. Twenty guards are stationed at the arena, although no games have been held here for a thousand years.

The captives of the arena are sorcerers of Melniboné who have lost their souls. Their bodies remain animate and functioning, but at a primitive, near-animal level. Stumbling and clumsy, the soulless bodies seem possessed of a cold, ferocious hatred of anything and everything unlike themselves. The creatures are contained within the sunken arena floor, which is below ground level. The many tiers of seats which once filled the arena walls have largely rotted away, revealing passages and rooms below once hidden from view. Piles of windblown leaves rustle in the dark corners.

The first soulless sorcerers to be placed captive here were mind-blasted survivors of the Dharzi wars. Ever since that time, a thousand years ago, their numbers have increased. Deprived of their souls, whatever animates the bodies has rendered them almost immortal. The creatures are fed only once a month, but they still live, although occasionally one is devoured by the others. Emaciated, filthy, and with streaming ragged hair, these shrieking, howling revenants are barely recognizable as Melnibonéan men and women.

### THE DRAGON FALLS

The Dragon Falls splash a hundred feet down the dry stone cliffs of the Encircling Hills, close to the source of the River Lalkhu. The falls gained their name 9,500 years ago, when Emperor Sadric the Third died here in battle. Legend says that the Emperor's opponent in the fatal combat was himself. A damp, dark cavern behind the falls is said to be haunted by Sadric's silently pleading ghost, although for what the pale figure begs no book tells. On moonlit nights the ghost of the Emperor's circling dragon-steed can be glimpsed reflected in the pool at the foot of the waterfall, forever waiting for her rider's return.

### THE FLOATING PALACE

Cradled in a cleft in the Golden Hills, close enough to the southern shore to hear the crying of the gulls, is an abandoned villa. Set within a lake which quite fills the valley in which it stands, the palace seems to float upon the weed-choked and stagnant waters. The Floating Palace is fashioned all of ivory, the once-polished white now yellowed with age. Spires, domes, walls, and doorways alike are decorated with an intricate profusion of fine carvings.

None have holidayed within this ivory villa for many centuries. Summers past saw its inhabitants glide across the lake in flotillas of pleasure craft, their flickering torches reflected amidst the ripples of their passage. Palace and lake

alike echoed with laughter, music, and song. In those days the lake was kept well-stocked with fish. Long centuries of neglect have left the waters more marsh than lake, home now to ducks, duck weed, insects, and a few hardy eels. Insects and mice now parade within the palace's ivory walls.

### THE LAKE OF MOON

High in the hills of the Isolated Fells lies a lake of liquid silver, its metallic surface reflecting the gorse and rocky outcrops that surround it. The silver is made from reflected moonlight, magically transmogrified by crystal lenses situated on the nearby hilltops. Only one of the lenses, constructed by sorcery in distant millennia, still works. Once eight such crystal prisms captured and converted the moonlight into silver, which then flowed downhill to join the lake. Over the centuries of Melniboné's decline the lenses broke one by one, and neither the skill nor the inclination to repair them exists in Imrryr today. The lake is less than half-full.

The Lake of Moon is one of many sources of Melniboné's famed wealth. Slaves still come to the silver lake to scoop up the cold, heavy liquid that solidifies the instant it is carried past the lake's sandy shores. The lumps of raw silver are then taken back to Imrryr for smelting. During winter the edges of the silver lake freeze. The silver removed from the area's magical influence remains solid in delicate forms. Sprays of metal are wrought in this manner by the cleverest among Imrryr's silversmiths.

### THE WEeping GLADE OF GALITH L'AR

A single slender tower of translucent quartz, capped with a pointed roof of silver, stands within a ring of shaggy oak and chestnut trees in a sheltered valley in the Golden Hills. The trees are vast and ancient, planted more than four hundred years ago. Regardless of the weather, it always rains within the glade where the tower stands, although beneath the trees it is relatively dry. Those who stand amidst the shadows and leaf-mould under the spreading branches and thick trunks do not do so for long. Beneath the trees the sound of sobbing echoes endlessly, mingling with the damp and drip of the rain. Never is there any sign of she who weeps so woefully amongst the trees.

The tower was built four centuries ago at the request of a Melnibonéan noblewoman, Lady Galith L'Ar. She left Imrryr and moved into the tower when she was a young woman. She never returned to court, dying here alone and unmourned at the age of 87. It is said by those that know such things that Lady Galith's only love died on the eve of their marriage. Rather than go on with life without her, Lady L'Ar moved here to mourn until death claimed her also. The slender tower has stood abandoned since.

The depressing atmosphere which lingers within the tower's walls is of such intensity that all who visit are infected by its potent melancholy. Lady L'Ar's home is now shunned by all, and the slaves who venture out across the island in search of rare herbs never venture within. Those who do invariably go mad, killing themselves or dying of a broken heart. Such was the fate of Kahan the Seventh, 329th Emperor to sit upon the Ruby Throne. Venturing to the tower to satisfy the urgings of his twin brother, he returned a horror-haunted and trembling man, dying within the year. Those who return from the tower still capable of speech will not or cannot speak of what it contains which is so devastating. The poisonous aura of the tower clings even to objects taken from it, and those handling such artifacts suffer strange and terrifying dreams.

## WYRM COVE

Wyrn Cove is a small and lonely bay on Melniboné's Wild Coast. Few make the effort to cross the moors and ragged hills of the Isolated Fells which guard the cove on the landward side. Any approach from the sea is made perilous by treacherous currents and partially submerged rocks. Within Wyrn Cove are steep cliffs with narrow shale beaches at their feet. Colonies of cormorants and gannets live upon the cliffs' many niches and ledges.

Wyrn Cove gains its name from its most frequent visitors, the rare and elusive sea serpents. Early summer nights see the serpents congregating in the bay from the Dragon Sea. They come to mate, the females returning in spring to give birth to their live young. Sporting bright crests which they raise and lower in complicated courting displays, the sea serpents gather here in great numbers, although reduced from the swarms of centuries past. Sparring and spawning, the waters of Wyrn Cove boil with their coiled masses and writhing, reptilian bodies.

While the males clash in duels, the females swim encouragingly about them, spurring them on to greater efforts and sometimes leaping or rearing out of the waves in excitement. Once a partner is chosen the sea serpents couple, tenderly entwining their sinuous bodies. The females return to Wyrn Cove on the night of the first full moon in spring, giving birth to their young live before returning to the depths of the Dragon Sea. The new-born sea serpents are left to fend for themselves. Few survive to maturity. Wyrn Cove, perhaps because of its isolation, is thought to be the only breeding site for sea serpents in the Young Kingdoms.

## A'SHA'HIIAN

Overgrown ruins of white marble lie tumbled at the southernmost tip of the Dragon Isle. The first settlement upon Melniboné, A'sha'hiiian, was abandoned after the tumult and horror of the Chaos Wars. Once a place of light and beauty, the city is now a funereal monument to the dead race who ruled this world before the coming of the Melnibonéan people, and with whose royal line they intermarried.

Broken towers, lower and less proud than those of mad Imrryr, stand draped with ivy. Broad avenues are empty, save for rushing wind and memories. The canals where slender gondolas once sailed are dry and choked with weeds. Palace roofs are collapsed upon rooms so minimally furnished as to seem spartan by Imrryr standards. Before the Melnibonéans began to serve Chaos, they were a calm, detached race. Once the Balance was betrayed, the people of the Bright Empire gave themselves over to luxuries and pleasure. A'sha'hiiian is not only a tomb for the people of a dead race, but also a memorial of what Melniboné might have become.

## THE DREAMING STONES

This ring of stone monoliths stands atop a low knoll overlooking the Lalkhu River. A tossing emerald sea of chestnut trees surrounds the hill, their branches bare and black in winter. The roots of the trees are exposed among the mud which soaks the hill. Anyone walking up to the standing stones will find their feet weighed down by the mud's sticky lumps.

Erected in a time now only a dream, the Dreaming Stones are part of the invisible labyrinth of ley-lines, song-paths, and megaliths woven into the fiber of Melniboné's existence. From a distance the stones seem moss-grown and craggy, but basically not unusual. Close examination shows their surfaces to be criss-crossed with inscriptions in archaic High Speech.

Alas, the weather has destroyed so much of the carvings as to make them indecipherable.

Those with witch-sight might, on occasions such as the night of a new moon, or on days when the sun rises as a faint disc of blood in the sparkling vapor of a shifting fog, detect the ancient force which impregnates these stones. Although their power is long faded with age, sometimes the stones thrum when touched, enough to set someone trembling in sympathy with the note vibrating through the rock.

The ritual for correctly attuning this energy has been long lost, although doubtless it sits misplaced in some idle Imrryr noble's library waiting to be discovered. When correctly sung in High Speech, the wild, wailing tongue of Chaos, those who stand among the stones can magically transport themselves to one of the Higher Worlds of the myriad Lords of Chaos. Without this ritual, the best that can be hoped for is that those who sleep among the stones may find their astral selves travelling briefly to other planes in their dreams.

# FLORA AND FAUNA

**U**NDISTURBED FOR hundreds of years, countless species of animals, large and small, flourish upon Melniboné and her lesser isles. On Melniboné proper there are few dangerous animals remaining, most having been hunted to extinction many millennia ago. Save for a handful of estuarine crocodiles in the pockets of mangrove swamp along the southern shores, the largest animals on the Dragon Isle are the skittish herds of slender deer, and wild boar in the deeper glades of the Meadows of Lassitude and upon the Isolated Fells. Hares, rabbits, gray foxes, red squirrels, and wildcats dwell in some numbers upon Melniboné, as do bats, shrews, turtles, tortoises, and many kinds of snakes and lizards.

Melniboné also supports a great variety of birds including ruffled pheasants, crows, slender-legged white cranes, owls, finches, swallows, hawks, falcons, cormorants, ducks, nightingales, and small songbirds. It is a Melnibonéan custom to identify children with birds, a tradition honoring Lady Fileet. Elric's namebird is the small white falcon.

Sea-mammals abound in the waters around the island, including bottle-nosed dolphins in the southern seas, and a variety of seals, sea-otters, and walruses in the colder waters off the Wild Coast. In the small, deep lakes of the Fells lives the giant salamander, a harmless amphibian of startling size, adults reaching up to five feet in length. When correctly prepared, these creatures are considered a rare delicacy in Imrryr, although few from that city hunt for them now. Other aquatic animals include graceful otters in the isle's placid rivers, golden carp, crayfish, many small fish such as sticklebacks and minnows, and frogs and other amphibians.

Melniboné and her attendant islets, uniquely in the Young Kingdoms, have not a single species of spider. This quirk in the ecology is ironed out by the sizeable number of insect-eating shrews, small birds, mammals, and carnivorous plants found across the Melnibonéan archipelago.



The southern isles, Wa'aiya'oro and Kiashu, have more tropical climates. Kiashu has no animal life whatsoever, although some of its plants are sentient. Wa'aiya'oro has many exotic creatures, such as tapirs, sleek spotted ocelots, winged lizards, gliding snakes, tree-climbing crabs, civet cats, sloths, wild boar, fishing eagles, garish parrots, and others. Most striking of all are the last of a breed of small mammoths, now extinct elsewhere in the world.

Two species once common in Melniboné and now extinct were a long-legged breed of horse, and the legendary giant oxen of antiquity, which were said to pull war-chariots into battle many thousands of years ago.

## LESSER MAMMOTHS

**T**HIS NATURAL ANIMAL is smaller and less shaggy than their kindred which dwell in the barren ice-fields of the far north. Lesser mammoths are more delicate creatures, their coloring reddish brown rather than the brown-black of their northern cousins. Surprisingly quiet for their size, lesser mammoths stand ten feet high at the shoulder. Only the males have tusks, whereas both sexes of greater mammoths bear them. Their wrinkled, hairy trunks end in three nimble "fingers" unlike the northern species' two. In ancient Melniboné these placid beasts would draw brightly gilded, ornately carved carriages through the streets of Imrryr, or sometimes pavilions upon their broad backs.

### LESSER MAMMOTH

Characteristics	Rolls	Average
STR	3D6+30	40-41
CON	3D6+4	14-15
SIZ	3D6+30	40-41
INT	1D6+2	5-6
POW	3D6	10-11
DEX	3D6	10-11
HP	CON+SIZ-12	68-70

**ARMOR:** 6-points of hide and hair.

**DAMAGE BONUS:** +4D6

Weapon	Attack	Parry	Damage
Gore*	65%	25%	1D10+1+db
Toss**	50%	-	2D6 squeeze + 2D6 falling damage
Trample	75%	-	8D6

\* Only male lesser mammoths have tusks.

\*\* Lesser mammoths may pick up an opponent with their trunk, and either squeeze them to death for 1D6 points of damage per round (the Mammoth's own STR must be overcome by the opponent to get free) or if they overcome the opponent's SIZ with their STR, toss them up to half the mammoth's STR in yards.

**SKILLS:** Search 25%, Scent 50%.

## DRAGONS

**D**RAGONS HAVE DWELT within Melniboné's caves since before the foundation of the Bright Empire. They were originally led to this world from another plane to assist in the battle against the Dead Gods. These vast reptilian monsters, scaled, spined and crested, brought terror wherever they flew, extending the boundaries of the Bright Empire from plane to plane. They were ridden by the best warriors of Melniboné, both male and female. The dragon sorceries which allow rider and mount to communicate, an

unnatural empathy and communion of will with will, were the first and greatest magicks of early Melniboné.

Once there were thousands of dragons in the caves in the old volcanic hills behind Imrryr. Now there are scarcely a hundred.

Dragons are about two feet long when they hatch. A dragon of some 200 years, still in its childhood, averages 40 feet long, with a leathery wing measuring 30 feet from base to clawed tip. The creatures slowly continue to grow as long as they live. There is no known upper limit to dragon size. Because of their unnatural metabolism, dragons must sleep 100 years for every day they are active. Dragons are incredibly long-lived. The oldest dragon in Elric's time is 5,000-year-old Flamefang, considered young for a dragon. Other dragons named in the Elric saga include Scarsnout and Sweetclaw.

Dragons exude a particular, musty reptilian smell, almost comforting to those who know them well. Despite their bulk, dragons can run surprisingly fast on land. Their reflective scales range in color from greenish-black to reddish-green to greenish-gold, and shine like burnished metal. Dragons have long forked tongues. With their slender necks, delicate snouts, and ruffled crests, they are surprisingly attractive creatures. When roused however, with venom igniting as it drips from their jaws, lips curled back to reveal needle-sharp ivory fangs, razor-sharp wattles raised on neck and tail, red nostrils dilated and cold eyes staring down, a dragon is a fearsome sight.

Dragons are highly intelligent, understanding both Melnibonéan and High Speech. In flight, dragons meld their consciousness with that of their rider. The first time this mindmeld occurs, the dragon communicates the name by which the dragon knows the rider. Elric's name was Little Cat. Dragons can fly through the planes of the multiverse, as well as through time. Such actions require powerful sorceries, and cause the dragons great stress.

Dragon saddles are works of art, with fine woods and precious inlays. They are high front and back to hold the rider secure. Silver stirrups hang for the rider's feet, and most saddles have a richly embroidered sheath for the rider's weapons. It is also possible to ride dragons bareback.

A flight of dragons and riders is directed through complicated blasts on the Dragon-Horn. The horn is traditionally carried by the Lord of The Dragon Caves, a hereditary title. Dragon Prince (or Princess) is the title bestowed upon any dragon rider. An ornamental goad is given to the rider to mark the new title, although the weapon is rarely used.

More on dragons and their riders appears in this book's scenario *The Suffer Glass*.

## DRAGON RITUALS

The children of previous generations of Dragon Princes are presented before the dragons at age 11. Having been taught the Song of Approach in previous months, together with the ritual steps and gestures used to sooth the dragons, the young rider saddles the beast and mounts up. An experienced rider rides another dragon alongside the novice, providing tuition in both the skills and histories of dragonflight. Like all of Melnibonéan life, dragon-riding is swathed in tradition. There are songs and rituals to accompany every moment that dragon and rider are together.

## PROPERTIES OF DRAGON VENOM

Dragon venom has extraordinary qualities. It is highly combustible, and bursts into flame on contact with air. This



FOR EVERY DAY OF DRAGON FURY, ONE HUNDRED YEARS OF SLUMBER.

venom ignites anything flammable it contacts, and no human armor protects against dragonflame.

Dry deposits of venom cake the dragon's lower jaw. When scraped off, powdered, and dissolved in several cups of water, the venom makes a powerful potion that confers strength and vitality to the imbiber. Only alchemists with a Potions skill greater than 80% know this, and even fewer have access to dragon venom. The potion increases the imbiber's STR and CON each by 1D8+4 for 1D10 hours, boosting both courage and stamina. The drinker must succeed in a CONx5 roll, or the agonizing pain that accompanies the first minutes of the potion's effect proves overwhelming, causing collapse in convulsions for a number of hours equal to half the STR gain.

## AMASHII

**N**EVER POPULAR WITH Melnibonéans, Amashii is a bleak and windswept island, fully exposed to the fury of the Dragon Sea. Lashed by storms for much of the year, its shoreline is forbidding and inhospitable, miles of black cliffs and narrow shale beaches pounded by the waves. Inland, Amashii consists almost entirely of bleak, wind-scoured moors, dotted here and there with shallow lakes reflecting the dreary, cloud-scabbed sky. Scattered stone ruins on the northernmost peninsula once formed the tower-prison of nobles exiled from Imrryr's court over the centuries. Amashii is home only to seabirds, fur seals, and ghosts.

## KIASHU

**O**N KASHU, the Melnibonéans indulged their propensity for resculpting landscapes. The island was shaped into a vision of loveliness. It was given bays and beaches of clean white sand. There were cities where canals wound between the palaces and beneath bridges of petrified lace, the slow waters carrying swans and pleasure barges amongst the reflections and pale lily blossoms. Ragged black crags capped with snow reared in the center of the island. Semi-tropical jungles lushly carpeted their foothills in

## THE ISLANDS

**T**HREE SMALL ISLANDS off Melniboné's coast can be considered to be the last outposts of the Bright Empire. Each is lonely and desolate, too wild or forlorn for habitation by the encroaching human hordes. The islands are Amashii, Kiashu, and Wa'aiya'oro.



verdant green. The plains alternated fields of flowers with shady forest, with cool glades and rushing streams. Artists and poets would come to Kiashu to gain inspiration from the island's rare beauty, to walk with the tame herds of slender deer, and to feed the plump contented birds which would fly to their hands.

Today Kiashu is run wild, her pleasure gardens overgrown. Trees and flowers grow riotously from ruined walls and rooftops. The canals of Vlaihuan are choked with weeds while those of sweet Lokhaghai are dry and empty, the harbor choked with sand. Where once lovers could stroll hand-in-hand beneath the trees in the filtered moonlight, now there are great thickets of tangled vines and thorns. Leaves slowly decay into the rich black soil which carpets the jungle floor. The mountains are abandoned, and their empty ice-fields gleam in the sunlight.

Some of the sorceries used to reshape Kiashu have become old and diseased, and their slow leaching has infected some of the plants. Many species have become imbued with sentience, and some are carnivorous. There are no animals on Kiashu, and it is a dangerous place for humans. Botanical dangers include vampire roses, gallows trees, and warthorns.

## WA'AIYA'ORO

**T**HICKLY FORESTED WITH semi-tropical rainforest, Wa'aiya'oro was stocked with game to serve as a hunting preserve for the Melnibonéans. Animals and beasts from across the Young Kingdoms were installed here and left to breed, as were strange creatures from planes enslaved by the Bright Empire. The variety of terrain provided habitats for many animals, not all of them dangerous, but every one challenging to hunt. And hunted they were by the jaded nobles of the Dreaming City, for trophies, for sport, for the mindless slaughter. Slaves were pitted against monsters for the pleasure in watching them die, and sometimes rare creatures would be transported to Imrryr, there to pine and die caged behind bars.

When the Melnibonéans' dreams became all-consuming, and they became unwilling to leave their towers for anything so active as hunting, Wa'aiya'oro reverted to the wilderness. Ocelots make their dens within the libraries of long-dead sages, and hanging gardens of orchids and vines spring from the windows of abandoned towers in once-grand Wakasabi. Strange feral beasts prowl the island's jungles. An unnatural ecology has evolved on Wa'aiya'oro, kept in fragile balance.

**"IT STOOD OUT IN STARK** black silhouette, a city of fantastic magnificence, in conception and in execution. It was the oldest city in the world, built by artists and conceived as a work of art rather than a functional dwelling place, but Elric knew that squalor lurked in many narrow streets and the Lords of Imrryr left many of the towers empty and uninhabited rather than let the bastard population of the city dwell within. There were few Dragon Masters left; few who would claim Melnibonéan blood."

— WEIRD OF THE WHITE WOLF, II, 2

Among the creatures which live upon the island are blind moleworms from the Weeping Waste, lonely lesser mammoths, tigers, solitary cave bears, scorpion-tailed spined miskrags from the Fifth Plane, and the tree-slinging gabberer from the jungles of Yu. The fabulously rare snow leopard lives in the peaks of the mountains, unseen by Melnibonéans for over two hundred years.

## THE DREAMING CITY

**W**ITH SCINTILLATING towers of lacework-fine stone, many-spired palaces of crystal, and delicate mansions of ceramic and bone, Imrryr is a city as wonderful as it is haunting. It was created by artists instead of architects. To human eyes much of her skyline is disturbing and unnatural, exaggerated and insane. In her inhabitants' narcotic dreams the Bright Empire is still great, and the traditions of her ten thousand years are ingrained and unchangeable.

## HISTORY

**M**ELNIBONÉ'S FIRST CAPITAL was H'hui'shan, destroyed during the Bright Empire's civil war. Proud H'hui'shan, with her rose gardens and palaces of jade, was burnt by dragon venom. The blood of the city's inhuman inhabitants was spilled on the paving-stones of her broad avenues.

A hundred years passed before construction began on the towers of Imrryr. The new city was erected atop the shattered ruins of the old. Traces of H'hui'shan still exist today. Shattered jade lies buried in the clay, and ancient vaults and stairwells have been incorporated into the foundations of newer buildings.

As the Bright Empire eclipsed one world at first, and then conquered many others across the planes, rich tribute from the succession of subdued nations flowed into Imrryr. The Dreaming City became the finest and most richly appointed city of all Melniboné, its inhabitants surrounded by splendor and luxury. Wonders from many worlds filled Imrryr's halls and galleries. Diplomats, travelers, and scholars from throughout the planes of Melniboné's dominions formed a constant stream through Imrryr's winding streets.

A thousand years ago Imrryr began to fall victim to the languorous ennui that had for centuries gripped her inhabitants, sapping them of their will and proud spirit and replacing them with drug-inspired visions. Reeling from near defeat at the hands of the Dharzi Empire, Melniboné began her decline, and dreaming Imrryr with her. The Bright Empire gradually lost her grip upon her extra-planar kingdoms, and their exotic visitors and deputations no longer appeared at the court of the Ruby Throne.

The birthrate began to fall, among the dragons as well as the Melnibonéans. As the families who dwelt in them died, once-grand towers were abandoned, sealed to foil the ambitions of any half-breed or human slaves who dared to think of living in even an approximation of Melnibonéan glory. Some of Imrryr's bright palaces and spires, each a different shade and hue, have faded and fallen, slowly crumbling and collapsing into themselves. Many towers are still strong but even they, like their inhabitants, are rotting from within.

Those towers stand empty and deserted. Melnibonéans have lost both the energy to care about and the skills to rebuild their dying city. Visitors from the Young Kingdoms now come to gaze upon Imrryr's fading beauty. To them it is a splendid vision, one that haunts their dreams. As yet the Young Kingdoms have not the skills to create an Imrryr of their own, although some have tried. Dhakos, capital of Jharkor, with its squat array of stunted spires, is but an insulting shadow of the Dreaming City.

Even though humans hate and fear Melniboné and all she and her inhabitants represent, still they envy the rich wonders that fill her halls. For those treasures that only Melniboné can provide—her delicate artworks, precious gems and rare metals—merchants, sailors, and petty lordlings from throughout the Young Kingdoms crowd Imrryr's vast harbor. The harbor is the only place where most visitors are permitted, and even here they are subject to insulting and harsh laws restricting their movements.

Within a few years Imrryr will be nothing but a dream, once Prince Elric's doom encompasses the Dreaming City. Imrryr totters, and requires but a sharp nudge to send her toppling into destruction. The Sack of Imrryr is described in the story "The Dreaming City." Until that time Imrryr stands as a testament to more than ten thousand years of history, which tragedy will claim in the end.

## GEOGRAPHY

**I**MRRYR SITS UPON A series of knolls and low, rocky hills. The harbor was once a lagoon separated from the sea by rocky outcrops, through which the tides swept in contrary eddies. The hills curve around the harbor to the north-east, and are riddled with a network of old, hollow lava tunnels, caves, and artificial passageways. The Lalkhu River curves around Imrryr's walls to the west, opening into the sea a short distance from the harbor. Aqueducts carry its water to the Dreaming City.

## ATMOSPHERE

Imrryr seems frozen in time. Its wonders recall the glorious past, while the present day has made but the slightest impression among Imrryr's tapering towers and bulbous, fanciful spires. A drugged and soporific silence hangs in the air over the Dreaming City, occasionally broken by a slave's agonized screams or the ecstatic cry of a noble spurred to fantasy by some aromatic smoke. Only the Foreign Quarter in the harbor seems active, and there the actions of its inhabitants are nervous and stilted, overawed by the alien beauty of their surroundings.



## APPEARANCE

**T**HE NAMES OF THE artists, many and varied, who planned the growth of the Dreaming City are lost to us. Only Imrryr remains as testimony to their skill and vision. The city grew rapidly, constructed with both engineering skill and sorcerous ingenuity, following the curves and rises of the ground. Her districts are many, the towers and gardens of each varied and unique. Almost organic in appearance, the Dreaming City seems to have sprung up from the soil fully grown, like some rare and magnificent orchid. The city is almost completely without straight lines. Roads twist, walls bulge, and towers spiral and taper. Around every corner lies some new wonder. Some compare Imrryr to the breathtaking loveliness of a coral reef or lace-like seashell. In truth there can be no such comparisons, for Imrryr is unique in her fading beauty.

Melniboné's thousands of graceful towers are each constructed of a separate substance. Narrow streets twist up from the shore to Imrryr's heights. Eight broad thoroughfares meet at the palace, forming the hub of the city. One of these major avenues is the Processional Avenue, the the royal road which winds from harborside to palace door. The palace itself is built atop the highest hill of Imrryr, crowning the city with its needle-thin spires, inlaid domes of alabaster and cut crystal, and minarets and towers of a thousand hues. Of all the beautiful buildings in this city, the Imperial palace is the most magnificent.

All roads in the Dreaming City are paved. Those roads which receive the most traffic are constantly attended and maintained by slaves. It is a sign of Melniboné's decay that here and there some streets have developed potholes. Weeds spring up in the roads where broken cobblestones remain unrepaired. Only the major avenues of Imrryr are lit at night, leaving the squalor of back alleys and the slaves' slums hidden in darkness.

## FORTIFICATIONS

**S**URROUNDING THE CITY and enclosing the harbor is a 100-foot-high wall, with watchtowers and parapet walkways placed along it. The wall is a solid piece of stone, without seam or join, its outer face steep and impossibly smooth. It is patrolled by the yellow-garbed Imperial Guard, Imrryr's rank-and-file troops, usually elite slaves.

Five landward gates allow access to the island proper, and see little use. The guards atop the walls are sunk in stupor, as a result of long inactivity. The Gate of Jade is inlaid with vertiginous carvings. The Gate of Bone is surmounted with the massive bones of a creature from another plane, and leads to the dragon caves north of the city. The Crystal Gate is a vast prism, and when the sun is high overhead it has been known to blind the traveler. The Gate of Flowers is more portcullis than gate, composed entirely of the stalks and blossoms of hundreds of different flowers, forming a scented, rustling barrier. The Gate Unseen is invisible except to Witch Sight, and regularly changes position.

The sea-gate overlooks the open sea, flanking the five mouths of the sea-maze. Here the guards are more alert. Catapults are mounted on the walls here in case of attack by pirates, an increasingly common event in the last hundred years.



# MELNIBONÉ



## IMRRYR THE BEAUTIFUL

## THE SEA-MAZE

**T**HE SEA-MAZE GRANTS Imrryr her isolation, and her continued existence. It is a twisted and complicated tangle of lightless tunnels. Ships must successfully navigate the secret routes to reach the safety of the harbor. Even before ships can pass through the portcullises of the sea-maze, they must first pass the great gate in the sea-wall, and its guards. Melnibonéan ships are allowed to glide through the maze with little difficulty. Human ships must stop outside the sea-gate. A Melnibonéan pilot comes aboard, and all crew are sent below decks save for the oars-master and helmsman, who are masked. They must follow the instructions of the pilot, who guides them blind through the tortuous labyrinth of tunnels. Any ship whose helmsman is too slow to react to the pilot's instructions may crash against the rock walls of the maze, and surviving crew members are enslaved thereafter in bondage to the Melnibonéans.

There are five entrances to the sea-maze, blocked by portcullises which can be raised and lowered in seconds. Five safe routes lead through the caverns, known to only a chosen few. Families of pilots are born and die in service in the maze, each family training their successive generations in the complex instructions of their own secret route through the rocky channels. Few maps exist of the sea-maze. Those that exist are hidden for most of the time by magic, and only the wearer of the Actorios—the Ring of Kings, birthright of the Emperor—can recover them from their place of concealment.

The sea-maze was once a natural network of caverns in the cliff between the sea and a lagoon. The wizard-architect Monshanjik formed the sea-maze with elemental aid thousands of years ago. The rock-walled passages twist and turn, sometimes briefly open to the sky, at others lightless and seemingly impenetrable. Here and there side caverns open off the tunnels where battle-barges can be concealed in ambush.

## ARCHITECTURE

**T**OWERS ARE PREDOMINANT in the Dreaming City, often enclosed within high stone walls. Either low buildings adorned with a multiplicity of towers, parapets and spires, or a single, slender tower rising high towards the heavens, Melnibonéan buildings display a feeling of lightness, upward motion, and airy space. The low hills of the city present a shimmering array of towers and spires. Aesthetic appearance takes precedence over structural soundness, and indeed those materials usually too weak or too rare to build from presented no trouble to the amazing sorcerous ingenuity of the artist-surveyors who built Imrryr of old.

In the Dreaming City one can see towers of jade, marble, alabaster, mother-of-pearl, ivory, glass, crystal, amber, gold, obsidian, ice, amethyst, lapis lazuli, and many other substances. Inside, the rooms are typically circular, with large windows and high ceilings, full of light and beauty, with walls and floors and ceilings inlaid with complex designs or painted with superb murals.

All buildings in the Dreaming City are wonders of art and architecture. Some towers have crystalline bridges as delicate as spider webs arching from one structure to another. There are towers which spiral about one another in an architectural double-helix, and towers which twist and curve as they rise up

from the ground. One tower floats several feet above the ground, moored by thick, tarred ropes to the sturdy trunks of old, gnarled oaks. There are towers sharp as icicles, towers like bones, towers like flowers with walls that unfold in the sun, towers with balconies and windows of stained glass, towers with bulbous domes, and towers with fanciful, intricate spires.

Windows and doors are often placed so as to ideally display the interior of a tower, in the same way that a picture frame surrounds a painting. Doorways are rarely square. Instead they are round, triangular, arched, or keyhole-shaped. Windows are stained, diamond-paned, lead-lit, shuttered, bulging, concave, or kaleidoscopic. Some windows are doors of glass, providing access to an upper balcony. Glass in windows is the norm in Imrryr rather than the exception, whereas most of the Young Kingdoms use oiled paper or thin horn.

Gardens replicate the natural, wild beauty of the island. They are miniature universes in which one observes and lives with time and the seasons. Small gardens are tended around the bases of most towers. Walls maintain a garden's air of private secrecy, masking its verdant arbors from passersby. Small trees, artfully gnarled, are nurtured on low hillocks. Pleasingly weathered rocks are arranged by fountains and artificial streams. Such careful structure flatters Melnibonéans, by emphasizing their control over the natural world. In the gardens of abandoned palaces, that control is mocked. Like the island itself, these untenanted gardens grow wild, with thick tangles of brambles and wiry grass beneath the tangled canopies of the trees.

Slaves' quarters are hidden away, often underground or at the rear of a building. Most towers and palaces are riddled with a network of passageways and tunnels for the slaves' use. Melnibonéans do not like to look upon their slaves, and often, unless the slaves have been specially prepared and dressed, are discomfited by their presence. These slave-warrens are almost never entered by a Melnibonéan, and many would claim not to be aware of their existence, so deliberately ignorant are they of their slaves' lives.

## DECAY

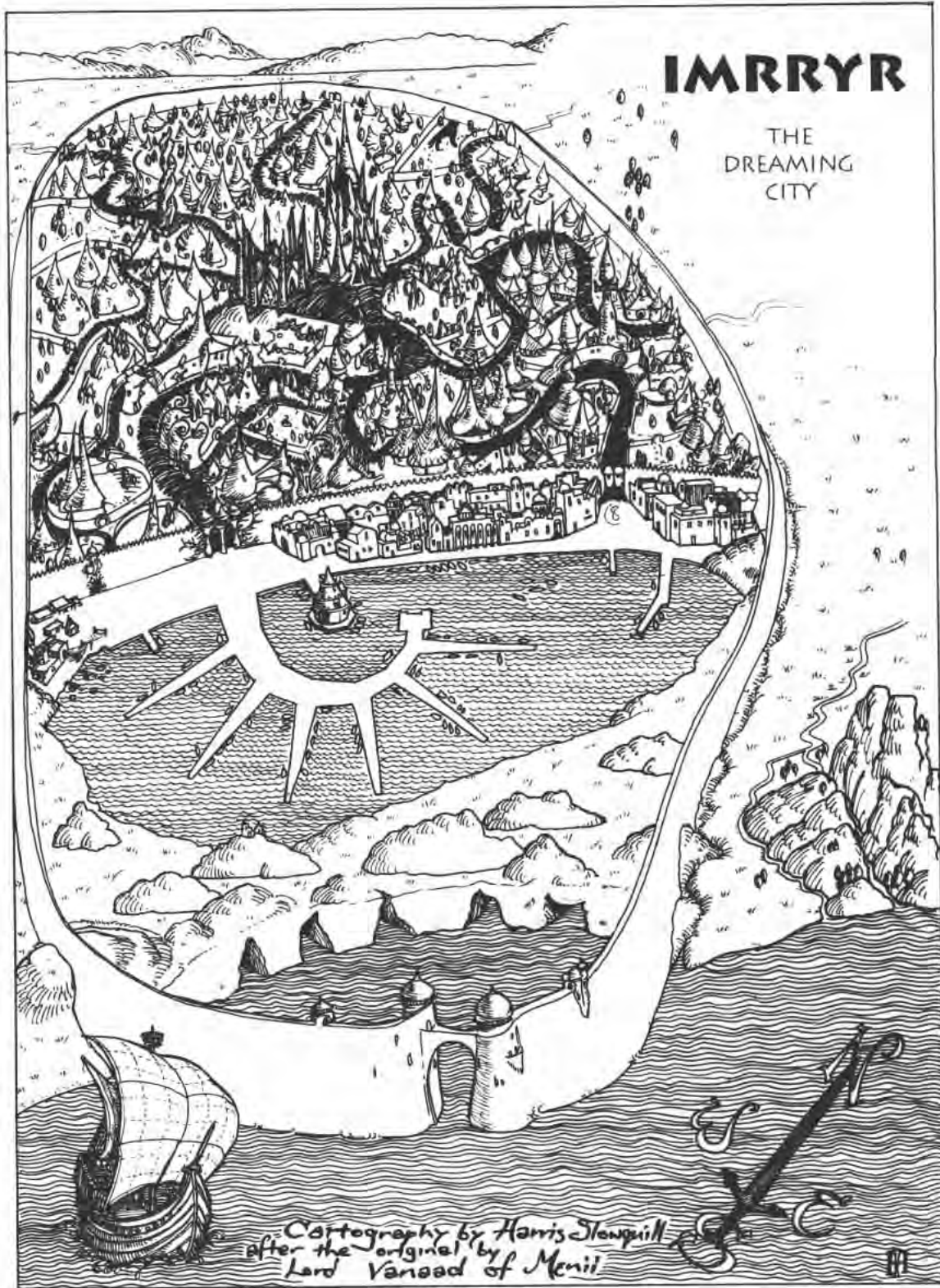
**D**ESPITE THE WONDER and beauty which is the Dreaming City, parts of Imrryr are collapsing in decay. Here and there broken towers stand crumbling against the cloud-streaked sky, and in the larger palaces one may walk from rooms where golden door-handles gleam and fine tapestries of silk hang upon the marble walls, into suites empty save for cobwebs, dust, and broken windows gaping open to the wind. The ravages of entropy are not immediately noticeable to the visitor, but anyone who has spent some time in Imrryr is aware of them. Most Melnibonéans don't care about it.

Imrryr is a city of contrasts, concealing its ugliness behind a beautiful facade. It is a city where most inhabitants toil to support the indolent, arrogant lives of the remaining few. The enslaved workers are denied all but the dregs of the fruits of their labor.





# MELNIBONÉ



A RARE MAP OF IMRRYR

## PLACES OF NOTE

**T**HE DREAMING CITY is a strange and fantastic place. At every side, new wonders compete for the eye and ear. Below are described a variety of locations, including those likely to be encountered by every visitor to the city, as well as more esoteric places. These represent a mere fraction of the fabulous structures of Imrryr.

### THE HARBOR

DESIGNED FOR A NAVY of golden battle-barges, the harbor of Imrryr dwarfs normal-sized vessels by comparison. Even the largest Jharkorian war-galley would seem impotent within its confines. Many Melnibonéan ships other than warships were moored here in the harbor's heyday. Apart from the fishing fleet of the slaves, the only ships today who count this port their home are a handful of pleasure-craft, and only forty odd battle-barges of the hundreds there once were. Unlike normal ports, which bustle with movement and noise day and night, the port of Imrryr seems listless, the very air sedated. Sea gulls are the most active denizens of Melniboné's harbor.

The port has delicate, fluted cranes like birds' bones, long piers and great wharves, cavernous dry docks, hundreds of miles of rope and drying nets, fisher-slaves' hovels, and magical lighthouses. There are warehouses vast enough to hold food for entire cities, and half-empty barracks for Melnibonéan marines and sailors, their inhabitants' days spent in listless drills and dreamed pleasures. The harbor district has few towers, and those are relatively low in height, most under 200 feet. Squattest of these towers is that named after Monshanjik, the wizard-architect who created the harbor and maze which guards the Dragon Isle. Monshanjik Tower stands on a small artificial peninsula which juts out into the harbor.

A stone wall some 40 feet high blocks most of Imrryr from sight in the harbor. Its face, scalloped to shape the waves of the sea, runs east and west to join with Melniboné's outer wall. There are three gates. The north gate is almost entirely unused, as it stands within the Foreign Quarter. The central gate is the beginning of the Processional, the Emperor's road which leads up the hill to the Imperial Palace. It is plated with richly worked gold, inlaid with precious gemstones, and carved with fine detail. Its hinges are of ivory, and it is barred with magic as well as beams of mahogany. The south gate is the slaves' gate, and stands permanently ajar, weeds and flowers springing up through the cracked cobblestones around it. The huts and hovels of the fisher-slaves are built in the vicinity of the south gate.

### THE FOREIGN QUARTER

The Foreign Quarter stretches from Monshanjik Tower, in the center of the quay-side, to the east end of the harbor. This is where the ships of the human nations of the Young Kingdoms dock. A number of inns and guest-houses can be found here, including the Tormented Tavern, the Ascendant Darkness, and Mykal N'gramath's Hospice of Indolent Gratification. The staff of almost all of these establishments have little in common apart from some proportion of Melnibonéan blood flowing in their veins, many of them indistinguishable to humans from full-blooded Imrryrians. The appearance of a Melnibonéan noble in these establishments is most rare. The Foreign Quarter pulses with feverish activity day or night, as ships load and unload, and merchants and princes conduct



DOCTOR JEST CONDUCTING HIS ART.



hasty transactions in the shadows of alien spires. It is the most active area of the Dreaming City, although a steady trade of drugs moves through Imrryr's harbor.

In the Foreign Quarter one can meet plump merchants from Ilmiora, Dharijorian knights in their armor and nodding plumes, Lormyrian philosophers in long robes, gaunt and shadowy strangers wreathed in pipe-smoke and mystery, squat and bestial tribesmen from the wilds beyond Yu clad only in feathers and scars, clanking scale-mailed Jharkorians with their spiked helms, warriors from the Sighing Desert in veils and robes and wooden armor, and sailors in their universal garb of loose trews and tattoos. While visiting the harbor adventurers may become embroiled in a plethora of plots, as well as chances for trade, intrigue, and affairs of the heart and spirit.

## MONSHANJIK TOWER

Its wide base tapering to a pointed roof, this squat tower is some hundred feet high, the wide windows looking out from its sea-green walls across a full, panoramic view of the harbor. A large archway at ground level opens onto the Hall of Concordance, where merchants and elite half-Melnibonéan slave-officials bargain, argue, haggle and barter. They sit cross-legged or recline upon rich cushions, while fan-wielding slaves waft the warm and scented air toward them. Occasionally members of the nobility descend to the level of dealing with humans, but only when the deal promises something of special interest to them. Much of the trade once conducted in the Hall of Concordance is now carried out in the Purple Towns. The hall, once crammed with a thousand bustling merchants and sailors, stands half-empty.

An archway at the end of the hall leads via a ramp down to the smoky, obsidian-walled depths of the dungeons, below the waterline. Those who break the rules of the harbor are imprisoned in damp, dark cells, made horrid with pestilential odors and drifting sounds of pain. Doctor Jest practices his arts here.

Stairs on either side of the Hall of Concordance lead to the upper levels of Monshanjik Tower. The Grand Admiral of Melniboné's navy, Magum Colim, and Harbormaster Darin Malvag have offices here.

## THE PROCESSIONAL

This great road, one of the eight major thoroughfares that twist their way through Imrryr, runs directly from the harbor to the Imperial Palace. Its length is lined with towers, bulbous spired domes, and intricate ironwork gateways into palaces and gardens of sublime beauty. Walking the route of the Processional reveals the most exquisite views of the Dreaming City, as the road winds up the hill in serpentine arcs, looking first towards the port and the glittering seas beyond, then towards the rolling vales of the Meadows of Lassitude. Countless lesser streets and alleys run off from the Processional, plunging between towers and gardens and into Imrryrian shadows. At the crest of the hill the Processional ends where it enters Dominion Plaza a great square flanked by the Imperial Palace, the Cathedral of Chaos, and the Elemental Court.

## THE IMPERIAL PALACE

The Imperial Palace is situated at the end of the Processional. It is discussed in detail in the section below.

## THE ELEMENTAL COURT

This park is devoted to the Elemental Rulers and Beast- and Plant-Lords. It is a place of rolling lawns and lakes, shrubberies and mazes, fountains and flower-beds, sculpted clumps of trees, statues, shrines, and wandering animals. Its further districts are overgrown and unkempt. Nothing here is caged. Tigers roam as free as the birds, and elementals also. Though the Elemental Rulers are not worshipped in the Dreaming City, they are respected. Defilers of their sanctuaries are met with severe opposition, supernatural and martial.

The Plant- and Beast-Lords are recognized by the variety of flora and fauna which is to be found in the Court parklands, while Earth, Air, Fire, and Water have well-defined shrines. In each shrine the deity is represented literally by the element it rules instead of a symbolic statue.

**GARDEN OF LASSA:** a floating shrine to Lassa hovers several feet above the ground. The shrubs and blossoms below quiver in the constant breeze which holds it up. The great disk of sculptured stone supports a light and airy temple of slender pillars made of spinal columns amidst a lush bower of lawns and fountains, echoing with the sounds of tinkling bells strung on silver threads.

**GROME'S DARK:** worn stone stairs lead down into the rich earth and the darkness. The tunnels below are earth-walled, and unstable, in that they move about underground, leading first one way then another. Although there is no risk of the walls collapsing, strangers are easily lost. Those familiar with the contrary nature of Grome's Dark know the secret way into the crystal chamber at the heart of the labyrinth, past the Room of the Worm and through the oppressive atmosphere of the Place of Subterranean Asphyxiation, a room where light cannot exist and the air tastes like soil.

**HEARTH OF KAKATAL:** more simple than the other shrines, Kakatal's Hearth is an open slab of rock. An eternal flame belches forth from a narrow crack within it. The flame is said to be so fierce that it could burn the unburnable and melt the Ruby Throne.

**STRAASHA'S WATER GARDEN:** a complex of pools and waterfalls, small streams and fountains, the splash, gurgle and spray of the water garden is music to the ears, liquid notes endlessly repeated. Narrow bridges arc over the reflective ponds and water lilies.

## CATHEDRAL OF CHAOS

In its heyday the Cathedral of Chaos stood as a glorious, glittering peak beside the palace, an octagonal structure of rose-flecked azure stone, with a soaring tower upon the heights of each angle. It rang with the perfectly pitched screams of orchestral slaves and soft music. Incense drifted through the echoing interior, and priests enacted the rituals of their worship.

Now the cathedral is largely empty, save for beams of sunlight shafting through the dusty air from holes gaping in the sagging roof. One or two doddering priests go about their duties. The statues of those gods of Chaos worshiped upon the Dragon Isle stand within side chapels, as they have stood for ten thousand years, smiling with malefic grace upon the pews empty of congregations. Not even the oldest priest could confirm or deny if the Lords of Uncertainty are amused by the decay of the land they made powerful.

**"ELRIC LONGED FOR THE TOWERS,** sweet lullabies in stone, which stretched like guarding fingers into Imrryr's blazing skies; he missed the sharp wit and laughing ferocity of his kinfolk, the ready understanding and the casual cruelty that to him had seemed so ordinary in the time before he became a man."

— THE REVENGE OF THE ROSE, I, 1

As Melniboné turned inward, organized religion became less important in the people's lives. Displays of faith became personal and intimate gestures rather than open displays of public ritual. For many, religion became lip service, and the concept of worship and faith abstract and removed. Records show that this was at the same time the Lords of Chaos began to distance themselves from the world. This turning away of attentions on both the macroscopic and microscopic levels of the world is reflected in the decaying splendor of the Cathedral of Chaos. Old priests die and no new acolytes come to take their place, their hoards of wisdom and learning lost with their passing. Only on rare occasions indeed does the grandeur and color of ancient days return to the Cathedral. Imperial weddings, coronations, and funerals are enacted on a vast and dreadful scale, the Cathedral of Chaos resounding with the tension and power of such ceremonies.

Six Lords of Chaos were worshiped by the Bright Empire in its heyday, three great and three lesser, and a magnitude of other minor Chaos deities. The mightiest three are Slortar the Old, Chardros the Reaper, and faceless Mabelode. Underneath them are Six-Breasted Arnara of Unmatched Eroticism, Pyaray the Tentacled Whisperer of Impossible Secrets, and proud Arioch of the Seven Darks. Other Dukes which have been revered and respected throughout Melniboné's long history include Haborym of the Fires Which Destroy, grim Balaan, Verdelet the Devourer, and Aesma of the Silver Light. Statues of ivory and inlaid gold stand within the side chapels



of the cathedral, smiling cold, cruel smiles, draped now with dust and cobwebs. The silks and velvets of old exist only as decaying scraps clinging to their smooth and perfect limbs.

Beneath the cathedral lie the Catacombs, echoing chambers carved from raw granite, holding the moldering remnants of the richly buried dead. Many miles of necropolitan passageways wind beneath the depths of the city, connecting the Imperial Palace and other towers, as well as tunnels even more ancient than Imrryr. The entrance to the Catacombs in the Imperial Palace is known as the Gate of the Dead.

## THE GARDEN OF MELANCHOLY ROSES

A pierced latticework wall of finely-cut white marble rings this garden. A circular gateway permits entrance at each of the four cardinal compass points. Within is an artificial landscape designed to evoke sorrow in those who walk through it. Splashing fountains recall the sound of falling tears, gloomy oaks loom over emerald lawns, and arching bridges of inlaid alabaster span limpid pools. Gravel paths twist through the garden to present a new vision of natural beauty and harmony at each turn. The many roses of the garden are unique as well as memorable and grow in countless beds. Every blossom is of a rich violet, some so dark as to be almost black. Their subtle perfumes are strong, although not overpowering, hanging rich in the still air.

Adding to the garden's despondent atmosphere are the reports of a ghostly statue said to shift about its terraces, moving from one place to the next whenever the viewer glances away. At other times the statue is not visible at all, or is a semi-translucent and insubstantial shape visible only from the corner of one's eye. Those who seek it deliberately never find the statue, even if they search each garden terrace. Only to the unknowing and unexpected does the statue-wraith appear.

The origin of the "statue" is not common knowledge, even in the Dreaming City. Rather than an inanimate carving, what most presume a statue is the form of one Prince Carolak, a half-Melnibonéan mercenary from Shazaar who was cast into Limbo some two hundred years ago. Upon that demi-plane he remains frozen, sometimes visible in our world, sometimes not. Cursed by the Melnibonéan sorcerer Earl Saxif D'Aan, Prince Carolak's fate will be decided by Elric in years to come. For now he drifts helpless but alive, caught between the planes and sometimes appearing faintly as a ghost statue in the ghostly garden.

Further details concerning Prince Carolak and his love for Gratysha, Princess of Fwem-Omeyo, appear in Moorcock's *The Sailor On The Seas of Fate*.

## THE SPIRALLING TOWER

The Spiralling Tower is not one tower but two separate structures, one of bluestone and one of ruby-red glass. They spiral about one another so delicately that they might almost be one. Despite their convoluted complexity, at no point do the two towers touch. Their symmetrical construction is so careful that one may step from the open doorway of one level across into the doorway of the other. The interiors are full of teak and mahogany panelling, inlaid with carnelian, mother-of-pearl and lapis-lazuli, and the doors and window frames are carved with intricate, interlocked knotwork. The Spiralling Tower today stands empty and abandoned. When the last of the line who dwelt here in luxurious splendor died a hundred years ago the tower was sealed up and deserted, save only for the



eternally-bound demons who rage imprisoned within its double-helix walls.

## COURTYARD OF HANDS

This open cobbled courtyard gains its name from the elephant-sized sculptures of hands which amble slowly about its area. Carved from the wrist down out of flawless rose-pink marble flecked with gold, and magically animated, the hands are possessed of no intelligence. Like giant stone five-fingered spiders, the hands creep from place to place in an intricate, endless dance. The spell which animates them is not effective beyond the courtyard walls, nor are the hands small enough to slip through the three gateways into the alleys beyond. By Imrryian tradition the Courtyard of Hands is a meeting place for lovers, poets, and conspirators.

## THE ORCHARD OF CRYSTALLIZED STARS

Day or night, a soft, shimmering glow shines gently over and through the saffron-colored coral walls of this garden. The silver light can be seen for some distance, its gentle radiance flooding out across the neighboring towers like the light of the stars. Beyond the demon gates grow a loose cluster of unusual trees, their sharp-edged leaves lustrous and a dark, glossy green. The dark red wood of these trees is valued for its cinnamon scent, which hangs faintly in the orchard on still days, elusive and soporific.

Radiant and crystalline fruit grows in brightly-shining clusters upon the branches of the star-trees. They lose their light when ripening, to fall as jewels upon the grass. If plucked from a branch before it is ripe, a starfruit keeps its cold, crystalline light for several days, while an entire branch would stay fresh for more than a week if kept in mineral-rich water. Unless allowed to ripen properly a starfruit does not last, decaying into sludge. Slaves collect and sort the ripened fruit by caret weight and quality. Most jewels from the star trees range from 50 to 100 carets.

## TOWER OF D'A'RPUTNA

A delicate tower of semi-transparent blue marble with roof, doorways and shutters of gold, the Tower of D'a'rputna is by tradition the home of the heir-elect to the Ruby Throne. Standing close to the Imperial Palace (in which the crown prince also has a suite of fine rooms), the twelve floors of the Tower are crowded with an array of Melnibonéan furniture and art, sometimes indistinguishable.

Prince Elric comes here rarely, and after his coronation the Tower of D'a'rputna becomes one of the homes of Prince Yyrkoon, becoming stained and soiled with his lusts. During the future period of Yyrkoon's one-year ascendancy to the Ruby Throne, the tower stands empty and deserted, which is why Elric orders Cymoril brought here in the Sack of Imrryr. D'a'rputna, the Emperor for whom the tower was named, never truly ruled eight thousand years ago, dying from a seizure at the exact moment of his coronation.

## THE DRAGON CAVES

The caves in which slumber Melniboné's greatest weapons, ancient dragons which have patrolled the skies above a dozen worlds, are outside the city proper. Beyond the Gate of Bone the paved road cuts through gorse-carpeted hills and rocky knolls. Twisting up through the hills, the road leads to a ragged cleft that opens onto warm and musty darkness. Stairs, carved out of the living rock, wind down into the caverns that riddle the hills beneath Imrryr. Torches are hung at each twist of the

stairwell. The largest of the cave mouths overlooks the harbor from the northeast, and is the passage by which dragons enter and exit. The cave opening is in the face of a sheer cliff, in the rocky roots of the sea-maze.

The dragons of Melniboné have slept and bred within these caves before even the founding of the Bright Empire. Legends speak of the dragons being led hence from some other world, although some tales tell of dragons leading the Melnibonéan people to this plane in their years of wandering. The caves, for so long home to the vast, winged Chaos beasts, have been stamped permanently by their reptilian inhabitants. Here and there small pools of venom burn upon the rocks where they have dripped from some slumbering dragon's jaw, casting flickering light in the darker corners of the caves. The musty scent of dragons hangs in the air, and the caves are kept warm and damp by their presence. Deep claw-marks gouge the rocks where the creatures have flexed their talons as they slumber. Less than a hundred dragons sleep within these caverns, where thousands once were.

Some caves hold the ornate, individual saddles used to ride the dragons, together with goads and standard-draped spears. Others are now quarters for the Dragon Princes, decorated in typically lush Melnibonéan fashion. In some stretches of caverns hot springs gush boiling and frothing from deep clefts in the rocks, collecting in steaming pools where the dragons infrequently bathe. One cave is the final resting place of dragons past, an uncanny expanse of titanic skeletons. Other parts of the caverns are dark and dusty, long abandoned to the pale, eyeless, crawling cave creatures common in such underground environments.

## FROM THE SILVER GRIMOIRE

**WHEN CAME THE** Time of the Choosing, there was no doubt in the mind of Sadric Lyran that the sleek promises of Arioch of Chaos were the rightful choice for the future of Melniboné. With glee Sadric struck down the Three and Eight and One who sat in Council in the forum, listening to the words of those aggrieved and as chosen representatives of the people passing judgment. By this act Sadric did spill the blood that was his oath, and the Lord of the Seven Darks appeared as if from the smoke of the blood which boiled where it pooled upon the stones, declaring Sadric Emperor of All the World, Master of Melniboné and the Arts (which Arioch would teach him).

To seal Sadric the First to his bargain, and to give him means by which the Lord of the Higher Worlds could be called, and to seal the pact between Arioch and Sadric and his descendants unto the World's End, Lord Arioch did create of the blood spilt by Sadric's bond and sword a gem of deepest crimson, a red light burning in its smoky heart which in truth were the souls of those that Sadric had slain, forever damned. And this stone was called Actorios, and it was made into a ring by the Emperor Sadric after the Three-Day War and worn forever by him and his descendants as a token of the power of the Ruby Throne and those who sat upon it across the years. Should ever an Emperor sit upon the Ruby Throne and the Ring of Kings not rest upon his hand, then Melniboné's doom shall surely be upon her and all her people.

# THE IMPERIAL PALACE

**T**HE SPIRES OF THE Imperial Palace, seat of Melnibonéan power, rear atop Imrryr's highest hill like an elaborate crown made by a crazed craftsman. A great faceted dome curves at the palace's heart above the Hall of the Ruby Throne hundreds of feet above the ground, carved from a diamond the size of a ballroom. About the dome, tapering towers of varying heights bristle like stalagmites, built of amber and jade, ceramics of pastel hues, coral and quarried crystal, their bases ringed about the palace's descending ramparts and walls. The masterwork of the artists who designed the Dreaming City, the Imperial Palace seems like the convoluted spirals of some fanciful shell, the inner chambers of mother-of-pearl concealing hidden wonders enclosed within its core.

Even here at the heart of the once-strong Bright Empire, age has taken its toll. The many rooms and suites of the palace contain countless wonders, much of them abandoned, locked rooms given over to the dust and the mice. There are floors of empty towers which have been explored perhaps once in 200 years, with narrow windows overlooking forgotten views. Treasure rooms contain the looted riches of countless worlds, and tapestry-lined halls display embroidered decorations that fall apart at the lightest touch into a rainbow swirl of dust.

Those parts of the Tower of Kings still in use, such as the Court of the Ruby Throne and the Emperor's private suites, retain much of their former glory. They are lushly appointed and decorated without restraint of any kind, although the unwary can step without warning from the brightest banqueting hall into a stretch of the palace abandoned centuries ago. Among the rooms still in use are conservatories, observatories, opulent bedrooms containing canopied four-poster beds, vast kitchens with ovens large enough to roast teams of oxen, wardrobes the size of a well-equipped dressmaker's studio, and communal baths and steam rooms where massage slaves await with oils and hot towels.

For millennia the Imperial Palace was a vibrant home to the most self-indulgent of the nobles of Melniboné, the proud and glorious Emperors of the Ruby Throne, their relations, visitors, and slaves. Now visitors are few, the slaves skulk through shadows and secret ways to avoid upsetting their overlords by their presence, and the Emperor of the Ruby Throne is dying. Courtiers and members of the Eagle Guard cluster in whispering groups in a handful of chambers and hallways. They discuss art, poetry, pain, anything but the glaringly obvious, that the Bright Empire is no more, and the Dragon Isle a shadow dissipating before humanity's dawn.

## CORRIDOR OF KINGS

Once past the main gate and palace courtyard, a long, wide hallway leads to the Court of the Ruby Throne. Known as the Corridor of Kings, the hall is lined with alcoves containing flawless busts of every Emperor or Empress to have ruled the Dragon Isle, from the aquiline features of Sadric the First

onwards. Here can be found depictions of Elric the First, 80th Emperor, and Iuntric the Tenth, said to have mated with a demon, beside a jade bust of his daughter, the unnaturally long-lived Terhali the Green Empress. The bust of Sadric the Eighty-Sixth, 427th Emperor, stands close to the inlaid doors leading to the Court of the Ruby Throne, Sadric's habitual expression of melancholy stamped upon the cold marble features. There are many empty alcoves before the great doors of the Court are reached.

## THE COURT OF THE RUBY THRONE

Capped by the faceted diamond dome which crowns the palace, the Court of the Ruby Throne is a vast oval-shaped room, hundreds of feet long. From the grand doors opening from the Corridor of Kings, one looks across the mosaic floor of inlaid gemstones and polished marble towards the quartz-carved stairs leading upwards to the many-faceted Ruby Throne. It sits atop a high dais, 20 feet above the floor. Sunlight, broken up by the crystal dome, falls in rainbow pools of color across the court. Looking directly upwards, one can glimpse distorted images of the towers that encircle the dome. The walls of the court are terraced with balconies and galleries leading off into the depths of the palace, and hung with a variety of banners, tapestries and pennants. From the galleries, slave orchestras weave complex, ethereal melodies of refined pain and grace, while other balconies support softly-wafting vines bearing rich blossoms, their scents perfuming the still air of the throne room.

The Ruby Throne is elevated above all the court. None but the Emperor or Empress may sit upon the cold seat of the Throne, although by Imperial leave favored courtiers may sit on the topmost stair at the Emperor's feet. A small door, opening onto the Emperor's private suites, stands a few steps from the Throne, atop the dais.

The Ruby Throne is carved from one great gem, its blood-red facets reflecting the court in a variety of distorted ways. It is the ultimate seat and symbol of Melnibonéan power. He or she who sits in it has supreme power over the lives of every other person in the Dreaming City, and, once upon a time, the entire world and worlds beyond. Its material worth is incalculable.

## RITUALS OF THE RUBY THRONE

Thousands of years of established rule from the Ruby Throne has ensured that a complex web of traditions and rituals has grown up around the Emperor and his Chaos-blessed reign. The current Emperor is sickly and withdrawn, ignoring many such traditions. Perhaps the most important of these was the sacrifice of twelve brides and their grooms to the Lords of Chaos to ensure the happiness of the Emperor's own marriage. Many say that Sadric's failure to carry this out was the cause of his wife's death during childbirth, and the sickly albino heir who resulted from their union.

The most frenetic ritual is the Wild Dance of Melniboné, marking the death of an Emperor or Empress, which fills the streets of the Dreaming City for seven days and nights, during which time sleep is forbidden to all. Naked Dragon Princes and Princesses prowl the streets, taking whomever they meet and mating with them passionately and violently, to ensure the birth of as many noble children as possible. During this wild dance of misery slaves howl songs of mourning from atop the highest of Imrryr's towers, while others are eaten. The Wild Dance ends as many lives as it creates. An old tower is pulled



down and a new one constructed and named after the dead Emperor during the days of the Dance.

Another Melnibonéan tradition is that the Emperor's ship must always be first to dock in Imrryr, and that the Emperor must be present during the interrogation of spies.

## THE RING OF KINGS

**M**ADE OF A SINGLE rare jewel set within a rune-carved band of silver, the Ring of Kings is the most potent symbol of the Emperor's might. The crimson jewel, at the core of which burns a smoky glow, is said to have been formed by the whim of Lord Arioch of Chaos. Other Actorios are fabled to exist, but are dreadfully rare, as it is said only the gods can create them. The Ring of Kings marks its bearer as Emperor of the Ruby Throne. It also contains magical power the wearer may draw upon at will, like water from a reservoir. Elric uses the Actorios many times in years to come, drawing upon it to fuel his sorceries. Because of his sickness, he lacks the stamina of his ancestors.

## EMPEROR'S SUITE

Decorated for the most part in combinations of gold and imperial yellow, these rooms were once the most lushly appointed in all Melniboné. The Emperor Sadric the Eighty-Sixth has austere tastes however, and has chosen, since the death of his wife, to furnish his suite in a spartan manner. After Sadric's death, Elric continues this most un-Melnibonéan habit, disdaining the rich colors and strange designs in which most of his people revel. A great bed carved of ivory and heaped with silks and cushions dominates the room, while books and scrolls lie haphazardly across tabletops, chairs and the carpeted floor. The narrow windows of the Emperor's Suite look out across the Dreaming City towards the sea. Sadric keeps them heavily curtained, but when Elric is Emperor he sits here often, gazing to the south and imagining the peoples of those far-off lands.

## GALLERY OF STAINED HISTORY

This arch-roofed hallway has many pillars and a buttressed nave. Tall windows of stained glass line each side of the hall. Once the multi-colored glass told the history of the Bright Empire, incredible in its detail. Time and the elements have reduced the glory of this room to shards and cracked panes. Most of the glass now lies in glittering drifts upon the leaf-littered marble floor. Only a fraction of the panes remain to tell their stories of the past in still-rich scarlets, azures, and golds.

## THE EMERALD ARBOR

This pleasant garden is constructed within a sizable chamber. Its translucent jade walls allow a small amount of green-tinged sunlight through to sustain the growth of certain selected plants. Among the tangled shrubs and flowering vines which sprawl here, long untended, stand six statues of gold. These are the remains of six Vilmirian pirates who sought to loot Melniboné, believing her weak and decadent. The pirate chief and his men had bragged that they would bathe in Imrryr's gold, and so by the Emperor Sadric's order they were drowned in a vat of molten gold so that they might keep their word. Their charred, gilded corpses were placed here, an elegant



reminder of Melniboné's imperial might over the Young Kingdoms' barbaric rabble.

## TOWER OF B'ALL'NEZBETT

In the Tower of B'all'nezbett, tallest tower of the many-spined imperial palace, a hundred generations of Sorcerer-Emperors have practiced their craft. Its doorway is of a shimmering black crystalline substance with neither lock nor handle, and opens only when a certain word is spoken. That word is taught only to future Emperors of the Ruby Throne. No others may enter the tower, unless they accompany an Emperor. Those that do are often slaves intended for sacrifice.

Included in the Tower of B'all'nezbett, upon one of its many floors, is the Imperial Library of the Emperors of Melniboné. This contains a plethora of grimoires, occult histories, and treatises, covering every subject from the Frequencies of Abandonment (inaudible to Melnibonéan ears but a potent sorcerous weapon nonetheless) to dissertations on the history and nature of the multiverse. (The most powerful of Melniboné's sorcerers had but the barest grasp of the true facts concerning the multiverse, but even so their wisdom far eclipses the greatest of human scholars.) Elric had read every book in the Imperial Library by his 15th birthday, some of them more than once. The most famous tomes held here are *The Gabbling Sphere* and the *Silver Grimoire*. Paintings of other realms and portraits of the Elemental Rulers adorn the library walls.

## THE SILVER GRIMOIRE

The *Silver Grimoire* was penned in the early days of the Bright Empire, written by Dragon Prince Rykath Lyan, Disciple of the Lord of the Seven Darks and brother of Sadric the First. The grimoire is both a historical text, describing the history of Melniboné with predictions for its future, and an occult manifesto, containing many spells and rituals.

The grimoire's lore is engraved upon pages of pure silver. Sorcerous bindings prevent the book from tarnishing, except where it has been touched. The fingerprints of Emperors long dead dot its otherwise lustrous pages. The silver of which the book is made was collected from the Lake of Moon. The

grimoire's words only appear when the moon is visible in the sky. At other times the pages are blank and featureless.

The covers of the grimoire are also of silver, embossed with pearls and sapphires, and bound with dragonhide. In sheer physical value, the book is worth thousands of bronzes, but the knowledge it contains is absolutely priceless.

Its pages include a description of the Ship Which Sails Over Land And Sea, and of how the Ship helped bring dragons to this world before the Bright Empire dawned. There are many prophecies, including one which states that Melniboné's doom shall befall her and her people when an Emperor sits on the Ruby Throne who does not wear the Ring of Kings. The pacts which bound Sadric and his descendants to worship of Arioeh of Chaos are detailed. There are spells to raise mountain ranges and dry up oceans, although these no longer work in this plane because Law has increased its strength. There are

descriptions of the other worlds which were Melniboné's extra-planar dominions.

## GATES OF THE DEAD

The decaying splendors of the Melnibonéan royal line are matched by the richness with which their folk are entombed in the Catacombs beneath the palace. Beyond the fine carvings which adorn the golden Gates of the Dead lie miles of vaults and passageways, the still air redolent with the scent of decay. The dead rulers of Melniboné rot in silent grandeur, wrapped in silks and velvets. They are buried with an array of jewels and other objects they might need in their afterlife, including slaves, lovers, pets and demons. Grand tombs hold the corpses of Emperors and their consorts. Sadric descends the winding stairs every day to grieve by the cold stone statue that marks his wife's vault. ☉





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## CULTURE AND TRADITIONS OF

# MELNIBONÉANS

THE DRAGON FOLK, FOREIGNERS IN IMRRYR,  
THE HARBOR EDICT, DRUGS, PERSONALITIES IN THE  
TIME OF ELRIC

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**T**HE DRAGON FOLK of Melniboné are alien. Their moods are so different from human emotions that they are considered insane by most Young Kingdoms scholars. Behavior which is unremarkable in the Dreaming City is often taken as being decadent, cruel, and evil by human witnesses. The Melnibonéans are hated and feared in the lands which were once their dominion, but are nowadays rarely seen in the world outside Imrryr.

Surrounded by an aura of fear, suspicion, and legend, Melnibonéans in turn treat humans with contempt. To them the swarming races of humanity are little better than beasts, their civilizations a crude, unflattering mockery of the glory of the Bright Empire. The Dragon Folk have yet to learn how far humanity has evolved in the last four thousand years. Before they begin, it will be too late.

### PHYSICAL DETAILS

**M**ELNIBONÉANS ARE TALL and slender, and their bones are delicate. They have slim-fingered hands, fine arms, and long legs. Women are willowy and supple to human eyes, the men similarly languid.

The Melnibonéan life span averages 90 years, with extremes of 120 years not unheard of. Terhali the Green Empress, allegedly the daughter of Iuntric X and a demon, lived for over 620 years. By contrast, average Young Kingdoms humans live only to 40 or 50, their lives made harsh by disease as well as day-to-day hardships. The lives of most adventurers are even shorter.

Melnibonéans have slightly slanted eyes and pale skin. The Melnibonéan skull is narrower than that of a human, with high cheekbones, and tapers towards the jaw. Ears are thin and close to the skull, lobe-less and almost pointed. Possessed of sensitive hearing, Melnibonéans dislike noise as much as they enjoy harmony. Their voices are capable of a wide tonal range, and their delicate eyes perceive a greater spectrum of colors than humans. Their hair is fine and long. Most have dark hair, usually black, although browns and auburns are not unknown.

Melnibonéans' movements are smooth and graceful. Like cats, a supple strength underlays their beauty. Many enemies

of Melniboné have been deceived by this seeming softness before being flayed by the steely claws hidden beneath.

### PSYCHOLOGY

**I**T HAS BEEN remarked by human observers that Melnibonéans must have set aside the softer virtues of emotion in their need to conquer the physical and supernatural worlds, and that they have abandoned natural beauty in favor of insane, drug-induced dreams of Chaos and horror. Such false beliefs reveal the gulf which lies between human and Melnibonéan comprehension and behavior.

The set of the Melnibonéan mind is such that concepts as guilt and conscience are unknown to them. Once an act is committed, it is beyond anyone's ability to change it. Why then should one feel nagging emotion over something that has already happened and cannot be affected? Remorse is rare in a Melnibonéan life, nor is shame known to them. Melnibonéans try not to let emotions affect their well-being, and may seem cold and remote to human observers. All Melnibonéans are taught to hide their feelings from lesser beings, and to maintain a proper distance between themselves and those below them. Unless in the grip of some furious passion Melnibonéans seem detached, concealing their emotions behind a guarded, implacable face. They do not speak freely, guarding both thoughts and words.

Aware that they are naturally malicious, Melnibonéans need no excuses to exercise their whims. Melnibonéans feel no need to justify any act beyond the reason that they wanted to do it. Good and evil are unknown to them. They simply are, and that is all that can be asked. With their casual cruelty and laughing ferocity the folk of the Dragon Isle judge things neither sane nor insane, relishing every experience which comes their way.

Along with their natural gift of sorcery, Melnibonéans inherit a firm belief in omens and portents, often allowing oracular consultations to decide their path. Melnibonéans do not enjoy having to make choices. Tradition and ritual prevents such tedious and unnecessary decisions. Conservative and secretive, Melnibonéans are without the human traits of self-control and self-restriction. What a Melnibonéan wants he takes, and if he must kill to have it, he

will do so without qualms. Privacy is of utmost importance to Melnibonéans, and many of them spend long days in drug-enraptured meditative solitude.

Melnibonéans are sharp-witted, sensitive and cruel. Pain is considered one of the finer of their arts. That which is sadism in human eyes is to a Melnibonéan merely a deeper appreciation of a specialized art. The Imrryrian artiste, Doctor Jest, considers that by inflicting pain upon his subjects he raises them from dross flesh into a higher, more sensitive form.

## EMOTIONS

**L**OVE IS NOT UNKNOWN to Melnibonéans, although it is rare. Once a Melnibonéan falls in love, it is for life. Many never encounter love, their lives engrossed in intellectual pursuits, but this is no terrible thing. "Each person's life," they say, "is destined from the moment of birth, and only on some do the gods bestow that happy agony named love." Should the object of desire die, often the grieving lover lives out the rest of existence in a drab and lifeless fashion, waiting only to join the beloved in death.

Melnibonéans often love no one but their immediate family, and even then know that family bonds are not always strong. They often seek holds over their relatives other than those of blood. They are a manipulative and vengeful people, and feuds on the Dragon Isle linger for centuries, taking on the slow ordered steps of an intricate tradition, a dance performed by an entire city. Once offended, a Melnibonéan will go to any length for vengeance. Losing face is a deep dishonor. The only fate considered worse than dishonor is exile, for nearly all Melnibonéans consider banishment from the Dreaming City to be worse than death.

Many observers have commented upon the seeming arrogance of Melnibonéans. From a Melnibonéan perspective this is not arrogance at all, but instead an awareness of their natural intellectual superiority. Melnibonéans are proud, and from their perspective they have every reason to be.

Once roused, Melnibonéans are a frightful foe, their rage fierce and brightly burning. The sight of an angry Melnibonéan is one to strike fear into the boldest of hearts. Contorted by rage, the already inhuman Melnibonéan features seem positively demonic. Melnibonéans revel in slaughter. Bringing pain and destruction is an art and a sport, and one to be relished. Melnibonéans' eyes flash with fervor as they laugh and howl the battle-songs of their ancestors. They are allied with demons and aided by the most earth-shattering

sorceries imaginable. To enter into combat with a Melnibonéan is to invite death.

## SOCIETY

**I**MRRYRIAN SOCIETY IS surprisingly ordered, considering their predisposition towards Chaos. Power is held by the Emperor, affirmed and enforced by the heads of established noble houses. Their rank is determined by the number of generations their ancestors can be traced back. The most important families can document a lineage of over ten thousand years. Emperors are almost sacred, the inheritors of centuries of lore and tradition. Their only duty is to rule their subjects however they see fit. The sole authorities recognized by all Melnibonéans are Chaos and the Ruby Throne, although the respect for these icons varies among individuals. The only morality held by Melnibonéans is a respect for the traditions that rule their lives.

The head of each noble house holds one of the titles of the Melnibonéan nobility. These include Grand Admiral, Lord of the Dragon Caves, Lord High Executioner, and Master Inquisitor. Although it is within the Emperor's power to strip the head of a noble House of his or her title and award it to another, such a deed has never been performed in recorded history. The titles are unassailable, passed down from generation to generation. Some houses now hold many titles, transferred to new blood after the diminution and extinction of several lesser noble lineages.

Melnibonéan society observes no difference between male and female in any way save their sexual characteristics. Gender is no obstruction on the Dragon Isle, nor is age, impairment, or sexual preference. An individual is only ostracized by kindred if he or she breaks with the traditions which bind Imrryrian society.

The noble houses are rigorous in keeping their bloodlines pure, expelling impure offspring to the slave pits without mercy. Those slaves with a more obviously Melnibonéan appearance and mien become the overseers of their mongrel brethren, human and hybrid alike. The slave/master structure in Imrryr has produced a society totally reliant upon its two parts. Without the drugs their masters administer, the majority of the slaves in the Dreaming City would die. Without the slaves to carry out the simplest of day-to-day functions such as cooking and cleaning, Melnibonéan society would collapse.

Melnibonéan life consists of a series of brittle poses, mannered observances, and public rituals. Melnibonéans are drilled in etiquette and the complex patterns of court ritual from an early age. To an extent, the demands of tradition are the only laws Melnibonéans recognize. The only rule that holds true with every Melnibonéan is to seek pleasure however one can. Prince Elric is doomed because of his nature, unique upon the Dragon Isle, that he finds a moral dilemma in Melnibonéan life.

So old is Melnibonéan society that many of its ways are set in stone, traditions which have taken on the significance of law simply because they have been followed for so long. To break with tradition upon Melniboné is no small thing. Only the powerful can do so without public rebuke and humiliation, and even the Emperor thinks twice about flouting convention. Sadric is the first Emperor for many thousands of years to wander from the path set down so many centuries before. His

**"NO MATTER THAT** his spirit had rebelled and made him question the Bright Empire's every assumption of its rights to rule over the demibrutes, the human creatures, who had spread so thoroughly across the great land masses of the North and West that they were now called "the Young Kingdoms" and dared, even with their puny wizardries and unskilled battlers, to challenge the power of the Sorcerer Emperors, of whom he was the last in direct line."

— THE REVENGE OF THE ROSE, I, 1



# MELNIBONÉANS



ELRIC AND CYMORIL, IN THE DAYS BEFORE THEIR LOVE WAS DOOMED.



WARRIORS OF MELNIBONÉ

son Elric will be even more unconventional when he ascends the Ruby Throne.

## EDUCATION

**M**ELNIBONÉANS ARE NOT fond of responsibility, and it is rare for a woman to sacrifice her time and freedom to allow a child to be born. Contraceptive herbs are customarily used. If a woman does decide to bear a child, she has little to do with the infant after the birth, except on a formal basis. Once a Melnibonéan child is born, his or her upbringing is largely entrusted to slaves. They rear and educate the child, providing lengthy instruction in Melniboné's long rituals and ancient traditions. Reading and writing lessons begin at age two or three, sorcery within the year if applicable.

Discipline of the body begins at the same time as does discipline of the mind. Although a child will not pick up a real sword until the age of ten, from six years age and upwards Melnibonéan children are given weapon training, as well as general exercise. Elite slaves from throughout the Young Kingdoms are available to instruct the youth of Imrryr, weapon masters collected at great cost from across the world. Education concerning Melniboné's many drugs is also started as soon as a child is old enough to learn to pick and choose.

## CLOTHING AND FASHION

**M**ELNIBONÉANS EXPRESS themselves through their clothes. Clothing is a way of stating oneself, one's moods, station and vocation. Individuality is conveyed in a thousand subtle ways through the drape of a sash at an angle opposed to the current style or in the flutter of rainbow-hued ribbons. Delighting in a rich mixture of lush colors, Melnibonéan costume is composed of startling blends of fabric, texture, and hue. Clothing upon the Dragon Isle differs from summer to winter, and between court garb and everyday costume, but regardless of season it shares the common features of luxury, beauty, and style.

Common elements of Melnibonéan costume include velvet, silk, linen, brocade, satin, cloth-of-gold or silver, fine leathers and suedes, furs, feathers, and delicate jewelry of pearls and precious metals and stones. Cleverly dyed colors are carefully blended and contrasted, with lush mixtures of pigments and hues in a variety of fabrics. Accessories carried by the fashionable among both sexes include lace handkerchiefs, small decorative daggers, perfumed pomanders, gloves, and fans. Most clothing is adorned with lace, braid, or complex embroidery. Hand-painted motifs also appear, stylized flowers such as roses, water-lilies and chrysanthemums, geometrical designs, birds, animals, and objects such as fans or landscapes.



## COURT CLOTHING

Just as the Court of the Ruby Throne outshines the barbaric splendor of any Young Kingdoms nation, so too do even its lesser courtiers dress more finely than the richest human king. Court garb is intricate and majestic. The cost of a Melnibonéan court robe would feed a family of Vilmirian peasants for several years. Long, sweeping robes or gowns are the norm in court—men's full-sleeved, women's sleeveless. These are fashioned of shimmering fabrics in green, gold, deep azure and rich violet, reds and autumn vermillion and a thousand other hues, cleverly dyed and wrought with a variety of colors that blend instead of clashing.

Such garb is voluminous and dramatic, often heavy, and many nobles learn to use the sweeping folds of their garments to punctuate a conversation or illustrate an argued position. Lighter gowns are worn in warmer weather. Garb of heavy fabrics, long fur jerkins, and heavy cloaks are worn in winter. Women drape themselves with elaborate fringed shawls and finely embroidered scarves in colder weather to compensate for the sleeves their courtly gowns lack. Beneath their robes Melnibonéans may wear light blouses or high-collared shirts of fine samite or silk, with loose sleeves or sleeveless, and hose, woolen in winter, silk in summer. Robes may be slashed to allow puffs of this lighter fabric to be visible. Undergarments are invariably made of fine linen. Broad sashes and cummerbunds worn over robes are not uncommon. Soft and ornate slippers are worn indoors, outdoors high leather boots with ornate stitching and buckles.

Often nobles' robes are of a material predominantly the hue of their banner or device, each noble identified with a particular shade. Guards, slaves, and retinue are usually garbed in matching apparel. For example, the color of the Emperor, his private suite, and state robes is yellow or cloth-of-gold, the device of the Royal House a scarlet dragon rampant on a gold field. Imrryian court functions present a fabulous array of rainbow-colored rippling gowns and robes of costly fabrics, sweeping and shimmering about the steps of the Ruby Throne.

## EVERYDAY WEAR

When not at court Melnibonéans wear simpler clothing, but even the simplest tunic is lushly embellished, be it padded, brocaded, embroidered with gold thread, or sewn with pearls. Dresses are the norm for women, doublets and tunics for men, while all wear hose, silk in summer, fine wool in winter. Cloaks are worn by both sexes. Women's garb is generally sleeveless.

Warriors on duty wear quilted and padded jerkins beneath their chased and embellished armor, long sleeved shirts, and loose breeks or kilts. Foot soldiers wear leather sandals, and cavalry wear calf-length riding boots. Depending on which nobelhouse they serve, warriors' cloaks and accoutrements consist of one major color. Those guards in service to the Emperor wear yellow, others deep red, scintillating blue, and every possible color of the spectrum in between.

War regalia consists of fine armor, lacquered, enameled, and polished: breastplates, gorgets, vambraces, gauntlets, cuisses and greaves. As Melniboné's wars become a thing of the past, the fashions of armor in Imrryr grow increasingly baroque. Helmets are ornate, often inlaid with ivory or gold in delicate filigree. The helms of the Dragon Princes are the most ornate, cast in the form of their awesome mounts. The dragons are depicted winged, rearing, mouths as visors, scales embracing

"All the world seemed blue and gold and green and white, and Elric, pulling his boat up on the beach, breathed the clean sharp air of winter and savoured the scent of decaying leaves and rotting undergrowth. Somewhere a bitch fox barked her pleasure to her mate and Elric regretted the fact that his depleted race no longer appreciated natural beauty, preferring to stay close to their city and spend many of their days in drugged slumber. It was not the city which dreamed, but its over civilised inhabitants."

— WEIRD OF THE WHITE WOLF, II, 2

the warrior's head and face. Weapons are similarly fine and slim, light slender swords, deadly bone bows, and long spears with sharp, leaf-shaped blades.

Makeup is generally worn by Melnibonéan women, who paint designs upon their eyelids and cheekbones to enhance their beauty. This fashion dates from the time of Terhali the Green Empress, when sycophantic courtiers painted themselves in order to attain a coloration similar to the Empress' own skin. Facial hair is unfashionable among Melnibonéan men, being seen as barbaric and primitive. "Apes encourage facial hair, Melnibonéans do not," so the saying goes. Of late some dandies have begun to cultivate long waxed moustaches and small beards.

Hair is worn long and loose by both sexes, although the ladies of the court sometimes pile their hair in elaborate styles above their heads. Filigree tiaras of platinum, or combs carved of coral or ivory might be worn to hold the hair in place. Scented and oiled, ringleted and curled, the fashionable of Emperor Sadric's courtiers adorn their hair with strings of pearls or glittering gemstones strung on silver chains. Some may place miniature lanterns in their hair, or otherwise sculpt and transform their tresses into complex designs.

## COINS OF THE REALM

MELNIBONÉ'S COINAGE IS the oldest in the Young Kingdoms. It inspired other nations to mint their own, despite contrary rumors spread by the Church of Goldar. Only Melniboné's nobles exchanged these first coins, and so they were suitably sumptuous, minted of silver-platinum alloy and struck with the portrait of the ruling emperor on one side and a dragon in flight on the reverse.

That design has been preserved for millennia. Known now as *silver dragons*, they are worth five gold coins from any human nation, or about 5000 bronzes in value. Silver dragons occasionally pass into human hands. Melniboné's *lesser silver* (lacking platinum alloy and the dragon image) is the coin most commonly exchanged with humans. Worth about 110 bronzes each, Elric brings these and jewels when he later journeys into the Young Kingdoms.

Melnibonéan *gold wheels*, the intricately carved artwork-medallions crafted to mark the reign of each Emperor, are rarely seen. They are virtually priceless. Gold wheels are memorials, not circulating coins, even in Imrryr.

## THE HARBOR EDICT

**NOTICE WHEREBY** HUMAN PETITIONERS MAY PRESENT THEMSELVES FOR CONSIDERATION OF ADMITTANCE TO IMRRYR THE BEAUTIFUL, CITY OF DREAMS, AUGUST CAPITAL OF THE BRIGHT EMPIRE AND BELOVED OF ARIOCH, LORD OF THE SEVEN DARKS, DUKE OF CHAOS, KNIGHT OF THE SWORDS, AND MOST DREAD LORD OF ENTROPY.

**COMPILED THIS DAY** being the 9125th day of the rule of his Most Beatific Imperial Majesty, King Sadric the Eighty-Sixth, Emperor by Right of Birth, Inheritor of the Ruby Throne, Bearer of the Actorios, Master of Melniboné, Exponent of Her Secret Arts, by the hand of Vasarik Dvorn, unworthy scribe of her most blessed by the command of the Emperor

and fortunate Lady T'varia Ryun, Dragon Princess, Mistress of the Dark Calling, Adept of the Order of the Whispering Phoenix, who states that it is her unfortunate but devoted task to record for the benefit of mere humans the instructions of the 427th Emperor of the Ruby Throne, as concerning the entrance of such cattle into the bounds of the Dreaming City.

### RULE THE FIRST

**NO HUMAN MAY** enter the gates of Imrryr with purpose of mind other than trade with emissaries of the Ruby Throne, or else humbly seeking knowledge from her inhabitants, knowing full well that those of the Dragon Isle are their superiors in all areas of wisdom and enlightenment.

Treacherous humans who by duplicity or with malice aforethought seek admittance to Imrryr shall be taken forthwith to the Tower of Monshanjik by Knights of the Order of the Eagle, there to be given over to the pleasures of the Master Inquisitor, artist of pain.

### RULE THE SECOND

**IT IS FORBIDDEN FOR** any save those of the blood of the Dragon Isle, pure and unsullied with lesser ichor, to be conversant with the mysteries of the labyrinth whereby the entrance ways of Imrryr are guarded. All foreigners must, when entering the harbor of the Dreaming City, be masked when in command of a ship, so that Melniboné's pilots may guide them

with skill and wisdom through the pathways of the maze, while those of no rank such as and including passengers and common sailors will take themselves below deck on pain of blinding. Those who seek to learn and navigate the secret ways through the revered sea-maze of Monshanjik shall have their eyes put out.

### RULE THE THIRD

**ONCE ADMITTANCE TO** the harbor is gained, no human shall speak to one of Melnibonéan blood unless spoken to, nor shall any human stand higher than one of the Dragon Isle, abasing themselves forthwith and prostrate upon the floor when a citizen of Imrryr passes by or enters into the room. When so honored as to share the presence of Prince or

Princess of Dragons, who must not be sullied by human gaze, humans will avert their eyes, never looking directly at one who shares the blood of the Ruby Throne, else be executed, or enslaved, or given over to the meritorious Master Inquisitor and his companion vivisectionists.

### RULE THE FOURTH

**THAT SECTION OF THE** harbor north of the Tower of Monshanjik up to the base of the Great Wall shall be deemed the Foreign Quarter, and is appointed to the use and practices of those aliens present in our Dreaming City. This area alone may be inhabited by the transient human visitors for a period not more than seven days and seven nights, being a

week in the common reckoning, unless in position of rare privilege. Any human lingering in the harbor after the elapse of their period of entry shall be expelled forthwith, or enslaved, or given up to the tender ministrations of His Most Beatific Emperor's beloved Master Inquisitor.

### RULE THE FIFTH

**ACCESS TO ANY OTHER** area of Imrryr other than that declared officially Foreign is denied, forbidden, and foresworn by those of foreign blood, unless in extraordinary circumstances which must include authorization from the Ruby Throne, including guaranteed bonds of behavior and obedience to Melnibonéan commands of authority from the human in

question, together with the recommendation and guarantee of at least one noble from the Imperial Court who knows full well that the breaking of any laws by the sponsored foreigner shall result in his or her own punishment and humiliation by Royal Edict and Decree.



## LANGUAGE

**M**ELODIC AND especially rhythmic when speaking their own tongue, Melnibonéan voices possess a wider, more resonant vocal range than that of humans. Two tongues are used in the main in the Dreaming City, although some scholar-nobles speak languages long dead in the Young Kingdoms as well as upon other planes. The main tongue of the Bright Empire is Melnibonéan (or *low* Melnibonéan), used for general conversation among the languid nobility as well as among their slaves. The Common tongue of the Young Kingdoms is a corruption of this language, reflecting debased echoes of Melnibonéan speech picked up by the human pets of inhuman overlords centuries ago. Common is used amongst the general slave rabble, although their elite overseers speak fluent Melnibonéan. No true Melnibonéan willingly learns such a gutter tongue as Common.

High Speech (or *Old* or *High Melnibonéan*, or *High Tongue*) is the language of Emperors and sorcerers, and was taught to Sadric the First, founding Emperor of Melniboné, before Imrryr's foundations were laid. It is said to be the primal language of Chaos, spoken even by the very Lords of Entropy themselves. On Melniboné it is taught only to the children of the nobility. In these times, that includes all Melnibonéan children born in the Dreaming City. High Speech is forbidden to non-Melnibonéans, even the elite half-Melnibonéan slaves. A human using High Speech on Melniboné earns a painful death, a penalty extracted from more than one Young Kingdoms scholar attempting to impress the Dragon Princes. High Speech is a rich and formal language, ponderous but finely equipped to describe concepts, phenomena, and qualities. Melnibonéan is as beautiful to the ear, but far less poetical. High Speech is used in modern Imrryr at coronations, weddings, and funerals, as well as for sorcerous activity.

In the Young Kingdoms, High Speech circulates mainly among sorcerers and the cultural elite, even the best of whom master only the rudiments. Even the most literate human speaks High Speech clumsily and lacks subtlety and insight with it. Some Young Kingdoms scholars learn it as others learn Myyrrhn or Mong, for its value as an additional tongue in their studies. For human sorcerers, it is invaluable. No one uses it in day-to-day life.

## FOOD AND DRINK

**M**ELNIBONÉANS HAVE delicate and well-developed palates. Melnibonéan food is succulent and rich, spiced and seasoned with a variety of herbs and other flavorings. Exotic feasts are the norm, although the slaves who make up the majority of Melniboné's population must subsist on food ranging from worse to nauseating. Seafood plays an extensive part in the Melnibonéan diet, supplemented by fruits from the southern isles of Kiashu and Wa'aiya'oro.

Dishes featured on Melnibonéan menus include raw beef served in a pepper and red wine sauce, fine slices of chili served atop sea-urchin paté, green turtle soup cooked in its own shell with ginger and garlic, roast swan stuffed with quails in turn stuffed with dates and honey, baby octopus served alive and wriggling, slices of raw fish wrapped in rice and seaweed, desserts of pomegranates, peaches, grapes, and

strawberries, light airy cakes, chocolate tarts, sherbets, and imaginative sculptures of flavored ice.

Wine is savored in Imrryr. Melnibonéans enjoy the golden chardonnays of Cadsandria, ports and muscats from Nargesser, and even rare wines from distant worlds, wines so potent that one may get drunk and dream for days on only their fumes. Some are served cold, some heated and spiced. Melnibonéans also favor a variety of nectars, meads and spirits. Beers and ales are generally considered a poorer drink, the choice of slaves and base foreigners.

Few of the dreaming inhabitants of Imrryr are actually aware of where their wine cellars are, as such matters concern only the slaves sent to retrieve a bottled vintage for their masters' pleasures. Many secret stashes of wine exist across the Dragon Isle, lying dusty and forgotten in long-abandoned villas. The art of wine-making, or at least its subtleties, has been forgotten on Melniboné, and the wines bottled today cannot compare to vintages of the past. Only inferior wines are traded with humans, the better vintages reserved for refined Melnibonéan palates.

## ARTS AND PASTIMES

**M**ELNIBONÉANS ARE possessed of razor-sharp and questing intellects. While they may seem a warlike, violent race, they also embrace the gentler arts, such as painting, dancing, poetry and song. Some write unstructured symphonies as paeans to Chaos, with randomly placed notes in incoherent melodies. Others sing exquisite arias, pen dissertations, construct theorems of sorcery, compile grimoires and compendiums of lore, or paint grandiose landscapes of impossible worlds as murals upon their walls. Sculpture, dance, and other refined arts fill the empty days for many Melnibonéans. All residents take drugs as an art form, striving to find more beautiful visions, ascend to higher realities, and to expand their minds to newer limits around increasingly impossible concepts. Such arts are often solitary, although regular drug orgies are held where groups take identical drugs, experiencing similar altered states and perceptions at the same time.

The people of Imrryr delight in lush and unusual design in their art and decoration. Most are free to indulge their desires as they will, giving their time almost exclusively over to the seeking of pleasure. Urgency is virtually unknown in the Dreaming City. While some practice decadent and terrible sports, most Melnibonéans spend their time in drug-induced realms and states of rapture.

Melnibonéans pass their days with their every emotion and appetite sharpened by a variety of drugs, and a walk through the Dreaming City may find them at every turn. Here a woman is weeping at the sad sound of a fountain's falling tears. There a group is softly humming along to the Agonized Orchestra, the surgically-perfected, tortured slave-chorus, as they scream sweet songs of pain. Others engage in long, languorous love-making amidst silks and hallucinogenic clouds of sweet-smelling incense; partake in banquets of epic proportion and tantalizing variety; navigate the mysteries of distant planes or their inner minds; study and understand the workings of the human body, the wonders of the circulatory system, and the unfolding mystery that is the brain; and dance with delicate grace through complex, intertwining patterns where a missed step could result in death or, worse, exile from the Emperor's court.

## SLAVES

**M**ELNIBONÉ DEPENDS upon her slaves, who in turn depend upon Melniboné. Drugged, dazed, and controlled by their inhuman masters, the slaves of the Dreaming City are generally treated better than their peers in other nations. Only laboring slaves have a short life-span, exhausted and broken by their harsh work. The majority of Melnibonéan slaves live a long, rich life, dining on finer fare than the free peasants of many lands, and clad in the cast-off finery of their lords and ladies. Regardless of their station, all slaves on Melniboné are controlled by their dependence upon the dreams their drugs bring, and thus the drugs' source, their inhuman overlords. Drugs make their lives far more pleasant than they would otherwise be. The pain and torment of their lot is blurred in a warm narcotic fog.

Slaves make up approximately nine-tenths of Melniboné's population. Some of these are part-Melnibonéan, performing an elite servant-overseer role in Imrryrian society. Most slaves are human, either descended from generations of enslaved ancestors, or survivors of ships which have crashed while navigating Imrry's maze, or enslaved for breaking one of the myriad laws of the harbor.

Any task which Melnibonéans cannot bring themselves to perform, slaves carry out for them. Because the sight of their slaves is disagreeable to many Melnibonéans, a hidden network of corridors and passageways exists throughout the Dreaming City. With them, slaves can travel about undetectably. These warrens let slaves traverse Imrry from north to south without once seeing the light of day.

## FOREIGNERS IN IMRRYR

**O**NLY IN THE LAST 300 years have humans been allowed within Imrry on any basis other than slavery. The first free humans to visit the Dreaming City were a delegation from the newly independent nation of Lornmyr, representing Queen Eloarde. They were permitted no further than a small section of the harbor, and the Tower of Monshanjik. These areas were considered soiled by the human's presence, and have been abandoned by most Imrryrians ever since.

Today, with concessions gained by successive delegations of ambassadors and merchants, humans may enter the harbor and trading areas of Monshanjik Tower relatively freely. Access to any other area of the city is strictly limited. Many Melnibonéans find the presence of civilized humans (as opposed to their slaves) quite intolerable, while the best treatment humans can expect is patronizing amusement from their impassive, alien hosts. When speaking to humans, most Melnibonéans speak slowly and use small words, as if talking to a child. Melnibonéans are always surprised if a human speaks Melnibonéan. Human who dare speak the High Tongue risk arrest for sacrilege, and execution.

Considerable rules restrict the actions of any human in Imrry. The five main laws are summarized in a document

**"**It was in their dreams that the nobles of Melniboné found most of their pleasures; they had ever been a moody and inward-looking race and it was for this quality that Imrry had come to be named the Dreaming City. There, even the meanest slaves chewed berries to bring them oblivion and thus were easily controlled, for they came to depend on their dreams."

— ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ, I,3

known as the Visitor's Code, also referred to as the Harbor Edict, first written about 25 years ago. All visitors to the Dreaming City must memorize it, and unless they can show familiarity with it, are generally forbidden to leave their ship. Such orders come not from the Melnibonéans, but from the Captain, who is usually loath to lose passengers or crew to an infringement of the port rules.

Breakers of the many laws which cover human access to Melniboné are summarily taken by the Eagle Guard to the torture chambers and cells of Monshanjik Tower.

One rule of the Harbor Edict forbids any human to speak to a Melnibonéan without having been spoken to first. A polite Imrryrian will give a human allowance to speak upon first meeting, but more traditional-minded Melnibonéans might scrutinize an increasingly nervous human for hours at a time before speaking their first word.

As well as the five principal rules of the Harbor Edict, there exist a complex web of minor rules and regulations, to which new decrees are added regularly. The most recent was the banning of any inhabitant of the Isle of Purple Towns, or any person known to do business with them. The Purple Towners are actively competing with Imrry as a center of trade. This has not harmed Melniboné, but the humans deserve punishment for their hubris. Hence they are forbidden from Melniboné and her wonders.

## TRADE AND TRADING

**T**HE ONLY VISITORS allowed in Imrry are those who come to trade, and scholars who come to learn from Melniboné's ancient wisdom. Despite the many dangers which face foreigners, people swarm to the Dreaming City, merchants from almost every nation of the Young Kingdoms as well as sorcerers, sages, and seekers after truth. Ten years ago the merchants came not only to trade with Melnibonéans, but with one another as well. These days most such trade is done in the Purple Towns.

### TRADE GOODS

Most traders come for Melniboné's rare and wondrous works of art, pearls, fine jewels, and precious metals. Others come for drugs, sorcery, salt, spices, wine, glass and earthenware. Melniboné is rumored to possess inexhaustible wealth. Although the amount of gold and jewelry exported has dropped in quantity, the quality remains fine. All artwork which Melniboné exports nowadays is antique. The art currently produced in Imrry lacks the subtlety of that produced in previous centuries, before the Dragon Isle's inexorable decline commenced. Imports to the Dragon Isle



include slaves, grain, cotton, worked leather, horses, and other herd beasts.

## WHAT FOREIGNERS KNOW

**M**ELNIBONÉ IS THE most talked about nation of all the Young Kingdoms, and spinners of fireside tales in smoky taverns rival one another with the tall stories they tell about the Dragon Isle and its inhuman inhabitants. That the Bright Empire once ruled all the nations of the world is still a sore point with many humans, who are threatened by Melnibonéan sorcery and angered by the race's continuing arrogance. In less civilized quarters, Melnibonéans are seen as demons in service to unnatural gods. Humans speak with greed of Melniboné's endless wealth, and with fear when recounting stories of old retribution against those who dared threaten the Dragon Isle. Eyewitness tales of those brave enough to have traveled to the Dreaming City add add spice to these yarns.

Sorcerers know that Melnibonéans are the supreme masters of the magical arts, while worshipers at the Temples of Law are told that Melnibonéans are evil, decadent and insane. Among the Purple Towns, whose people have taken the measure of these aliens, Melnibonéans are mistrusted rather than hated. On Pan Tang they are despised with a jealous loathing. Spreading fear, rumor, and superstition in their wake, Melnibonéans are known of everywhere in the Young Kingdoms.

## DRUGS

**T**HE DREAMING CITY gained its name centuries past because of the nearly uniform use of drugs and potions which titillate, terrify, and control the minds of its inhabitants. Melnibonéans and their human slaves alike partake of a variety of drugs; the former for the experiences which the drugs bring, the latter without choice.

For the Melnibonéan nobility, drugs are a way of escaping the tedium of daily existence and reliving the faded splendors of the Bright Empire's glorious past. Drugs also provide new, sometimes terrifying experiences, as well as assisting and stimulating sorcery, pain, and other experiences and desires. In the dreams which their drugs produce, Melnibonéans find wonders which would drive lesser beings mad, and delight in horrors which bring rare smiles to their beautiful, impassive faces.

Enraptured by the mind-expanding qualities of the substances they consume, Melnibonéans spend long days wrapped in drug-induced pleasure, their minds caught up in the beauty of a dew-drop refracting rainbows on the petal of a rose; formulating delicate poetry of breath-taking melancholy; or psychically traversing the boundaries of Lord Arioch's Seven Darks. At other times Melnibonéans ingest drugs to

## POTIONS

Drug	Type(s)	Skill	Cost
Arveed	P,N	81%	10 bronze/glass
Bloodflame	P	71%	6 bronze/gram
Glifilinar	S	81%	200 bronze/flask
Golden Moss	M	51%	85 bronze per sq. foot
Hellebore	O	31%	80 bronze/pinch
Imana Root	S	61%	20 bronze/ounce
Mandragore	O,S	31%	25 bronze/pouch
Noidel	O	21%	15 bronze/plant
Garbleweed	P,M	71%	30 bronze/ounce
Xanan	N	71%	5 bronze/ounce

**DRUG:** Name of the drug. Further description is given below.

**TYPE(S):** M - medicinal, N - narcotic, O - occult, P - psychoactive, S - stimulant.

**POTIONS SKILL:** The minimum skill level in Potions required to correctly harvest and process the plant from which the drug is extracted. The physician or alchemist needs a skill roll to see if the batch succeeds. A Natural World roll might have to be made to locate where the drug is grown.

**COST:** Cost in bronzes to buy the drug on the Melnibonéan market. Human traders reselling these drugs in the Young Kingdoms mark up prices tenfold or more.

keep them active and alert, heightening reactions and stamina as well as moods and emotions.

Melniboné's many slaves, human and half-breed alike, partake in drugs at their masters' and mistresses' command. Happy slaves are productive slaves, and so they toil for their masters in drug-induced love, even nurturing the gardens which produce the drugs that enslave them.

Laboring slaves are constantly sedated with potions and powders in their food and wine to sap their willpower and destroy their intellects. Trustworthy slaves, and those who must perform tasks needing concentration and skill, are dosed with more sophisticated drugs. Such brews are invariably addictive. Without the pleasure the drugs bring, the slaves find their existences less bearable, sometimes agonizing. In some cases slaves know that their addiction to certain drugs keeps them alive, and thus must toil always at the command of those who hold the substance of their sweet suffering.

Melnibonéan adventurers, unless willing to be ostracized and considered eccentric by their inhuman peers, will no doubt partake of recreational substances. Valued human visitors to the Dragon Isle may also be introduced to enjoyable hallucinogens, or unknowingly drugged by Melnibonéans hungry for control.

As the variety of drugs cultivated and created by the Melnibonéan race over the centuries is astoundingly varied, only a small sample can be mentioned here. There are many drug-producing plants farmed on the Dragon Isle, as well as herbs aromatic and flavorsome, and plants grown only for the beauty of their blossoms. Gamemasters should have no qualms in introducing substances of their own creation into Immrry-based campaigns.

## GARBLEWEED (MEDICINAL, PSYCHOACTIVE)

**GARBLEWEED GROWS** all across the Melnibonéan archipelago, the Isle of Purple Towns, Sorcerer's Isle, and the northern region of the Southern Continent. The tough, woody stalks of the plant grow up to 20 feet high, and thick as a person's wrist. Leaves are numerous and broad, with five points and a serrated edge. In spring and late summer the female plants grow resin-rich blossoms, or heads. The heads, and to a lesser extent the leaves, if dried and smoked, create a relaxed feeling of mild hilarity and peacefulness, reducing INT by 1D3 for 1-2 hours. A user with a failed Charisma roll experiences paranoia and nervousness. The empathy among garbleweed smokers lets them understand one another's drug-addled conversations, which seem to explain everything while making no sense at all. As medicine, garbleweed relieves stress and nausea and also promotes appetite. Regular heavy use affects memory, speech, and activity levels. Slaves on Melniboné smoke garbleweed, as do sailors across the Young Kingdoms. It is said that frequent users can be recognized by their hairy noses, but this may not be true.

## DRUGS OF THE DRAGON ISLE

**U**PON THE Meadows of Lassitude grow a profusion of herbs, shrubs, roots, flowers, and mosses. Slaves of Melniboné gather these plants at appropriate times of the year, and deliver them to Imrryr. Other slaves extract from the raw plants the drugs that are smoked, drunk, eaten, or absorbed through the skin—that alter perceptions of color, time, and space, that heighten sensation, touch, or sound, or enhance physical or mental characteristics.

This section details ten drugs, natural and otherwise, commonly found on Melniboné. Many others exist, and gamemasters should invent further drugs following the examples given here.

### MEDICINAL

Drugs in this category affect the body. Some increase or decrease Strength or Constitution. Healing herbs aid or speed recovery from injury or disease.

### NARCOTIC

These drugs have powerful relaxant and depressant qualities, cause drowsiness or lack of co-ordination, and may interfere with memory and speech. Narcotic drugs are physically addictive. Withdrawal signs include sweating, muscular tremors, aches, and mental anguish as the lack of the drug sends shivers of pain through the user's body. The foods Melnibonéan slaves eat often include narcotics that render them passive and tranquil, and thus controllable. Melnibonéans smoke other narcotics or absorb them through the skin, gaining a feeling of soothing peace.

### OCCULT

The sorcerer-nobles of Melniboné use these in their magicks. Some send the sorcerer into a trance. Others sharpen their summoning skills, or open their eyes to worlds beyond. They are also used in magical potions and occult infusions. Other drugs in this class attract or repel demons and other-planar entities. Numberless occult drugs and herbs were gathered from other nations and other worlds over so many millennia. Strange, often-forgotten plants now grow in profusion everywhere on the Isle of Melniboné.

### PSYCHOACTIVE

These drugs stimulate the mind or alter thoughts, mood, emotions, and perceptions of color, time, and sensation. The weaker drugs in this category, and the early stages of strong psychoactives, produce euphoria, uncontrollable laughter, fixed grins, meandering conversations, and feelings of empathy. Strong psychoactive substances induce hallucinations and alter the mind.

Melnibonéans use psychoactive drugs to control and in some cases to destroy the minds of slaves. Just as frequently they use them for their own enjoyment. Psychoactive drugs are rarely physically addictive, but many users find the ease with which the drugged state is achieved to be so compelling that they neglect or refuse other ways to gain the pleasures that the drug brings. Prolonged frequent use can result in memory loss, depression, or flatness of emotion, and general withdrawal. Repeated strong doses of some psychoactives can induce psychosis.

### STIMULANT

Stimulants arouse, excite, and give the user feelings of rushing energy, joy, and supreme self-control. Although it is possible to offset exhaustion with stimulants, most give only temporary or illusory stamina. They can also affect emotions, coordination, muscle control, and sexual drive. Stimulants sometimes affect appetite, eliminating hunger pangs until the drug wears off, at which point the user may collapse. Stimulants are addictive, and regular or large doses can create delusions of grandeur or of fearful suspicion. Heavy stimulant users may become aggressive or nervous, and may lose control of random small muscles in the face or limbs.

## DRUGS IN COMMON USE

### ARVEED (NARCOTIC, PSYCHOACTIVE)

Arveed, known as the "yellow wine of madness" in the Young Kingdoms, confers dreams of strange worlds and distant spheres. Arveed is brewed only in Ilmar, one of the city-states of Ilmiora. Humans are far more susceptible to the effects of Arveed than are Melnibonéans. The wine has a potency of 1D10+5, different vintages varying in quality. Drinkers of Arveed match their CON against the wine's potency. A successful roll means the wine increases Listen, Scent, and Taste skills by 1D5+5 percentiles for 1D3 hours. Failure means visions of a thousand other worlds grip the victim's mind. This drives human drinkers to gibbering insanity, but a Melnibonéan must drink an entire bottle of strong Arveed to fall into visionary unconsciousness.

### BLOOD FLAME (PSYCHOACTIVE)

The sap of the Kaelthorn tree, when gathered and lightly dried, becomes a sticky yellow resin, which when smoked inspires



visions of hellfire and demon-inflicted suffering. Bloodflame, as the sap is called, burns slowly, with a sharp, citrus odor. Its name originates from the common sensation that the drug has turned one's blood to fire, burning through the veins like lava. On Melniboné its users have tired of ethereal beauty, and seek instead darker, more passionate pleasures to arouse their jaded senses. They also use Bloodflame to punish disobedient slaves. A victim who takes it unawares matches INT against Bloodflame's potency of 2D6+2. Success increases Million Spheres skill by 10 percentiles for 1D4 hours. Failure means the victim receives no skill increase and believes the drug's hallucinations are real. In both cases pain reduces physical skills by 25 percentiles for one hour.

## GLIFILINAR (STIMULANT)

Glifilin mushrooms grow only on rotting wood in the first month of autumn. Their caps and stalks are opalescent, their gills faintly green. The drug extracted from their juices makes a powerful stimulant of potency 3D10. A single drop of Glifilinar, administered in water, provokes a dramatic response. The user's body produces maximum energy, allowing prodigious feats of stamina, strength and speed. This effectively doubles the user's STR, CON, and DEX for 10+1D10 hours. Unfortunately, the body burns itself up, breaking down fat, muscle tissue, and internal organs to fuel the drug-provoked activity. The drug is always fatal. Its emaciated victims die in gasping agony. Melnibonéan battle-barge captains give Glifilinar to slaves to provoke emergency speed.

## GOLDEN MOSS (MEDICINAL)

Golden Moss grows at the edge of the Meadows of Lassitude by the Intangible Forest, where slender young saplings shake their branches at the rolling sky and the low, boulder-dotted weald rises at their roots. As rare as it is useful, Golden Moss grows only in the shade, near water stained with the tannin of oak leaves. A poultice made from Golden Moss heals 2D6 points of damage in 1D6 hours. It heals burns without scarring.

## HELLEBORE (OCCULT)

This perennial, a creeper, grows wherever demons have shed blood. The six-inch plant has vivid pink flowers, silky-haired, fingernail-sized circular leaves, and an exposed root network. A sorcerer who ritually burns dried Hellebore blossoms may summon a representative of the demon breed whose blood fertilized that plant. The sorcerer need not know the demon's breed name. Once the demon appears, the sorcerer must bind or command it as usual.

## IMANA ROOT (STIMULANT)

The poisonous imana bush, a spined and spindly plant, never reaches over four feet in height. When soaked in water for three days to leach out toxins, then dried and powdered, its root scrapings can be mixed with wine to create a bitter-tasting but effective potion. The potion adds 1D6+2 to STR for 1D6+2 hours. If not correctly prepared, imana root becomes a deadly poison with 2D10 potency. Those who employ imana root use strong spices to conceal its acrid taste.

## MANDRAGORE (OCCULT)

Mandragore is an evergreen perennial flower native to the Marshes of the Mist but cultivated for centuries on Melniboné. The plant's sword-like, dark green leaves grow from a fist-sized bulb in shallow wetlands and fens. Each plant bears

three or four unscented purple-blue blossoms shot through with reddish veins near the stalk. Something in their delicately beautiful shape resembles a dragon and rider—thus the plant's name. When burned, the dried and powdered flower induces a trance that adds 1D20 percentiles to the success chance of any communication with dragons for 4-8 hours. A pinch of mandragore pollen, sniffed or rubbed into the gums, dispels feelings of drowsiness for 4-8 hours, but once it has worn off the user feels twice as tired. Mandragore stays in the bloodstream for a day after use. Further benefits during this time require a dose twice as large as the first.

## NOIDEL (OCCULT)

Noidel bushes dot the Plain of Imrryr. The plants have an unusual occult property: they grow shadows the way most plants grow flowers. The ground beneath a noidel bush and the spaces between its broad leaves are always in shade, no matter how low or how diffuse is the sunlight. When squeezed or crushed the dark blue-purple berries make a poisonous drink of POT 15 that destroys first the retinas of the eye, then the tissue of the brain.

## XANAN (NARCOTIC)

This parasitic orchid-like plant grows from the branches of other trees, drawing nutrients from the host plant's sap. Xanan flowers are orange, mottled with reddish markings, the leaves long and drooping. A POT 16 narcotic, the Xanan leaf effectively removes individual thoughts from any who chew it. Effects last one day. Slaves drugged with Xanan lose their intellect and self-awareness, becoming automatons—perfect laborers.

# PERSONALITIES IN THE TIME OF ELRIC

**DETAILED BELOW** are nine Melnibonéans, drawn from the works of Michael Moorcock. These are among the most powerful and ambitious people in Imrryr, and the adventurers may have a chance to meet them. In the case of Doctor Jest, this may well be a singularly unfortunate experience.

The characters are given in accordance with their status at this prologue stage of the Elric saga. Thus, Elric is presented without Stormbringer, Dyvim Slorn (as yet unknown to Elric) does not appear, and the Emperor Sadric yet lives.

## SADRIC THE EIGHTY-SIXTH

**T**HE EMPEROR SADRIC is tall and filled with misery. Even by Melnibonéan standards he is of exceptional height, and he stoops because of this. He has heavy-lidded eyes, prominent brows, a long, sharp nose and delicate be-ringed hands. It is his habit to speak in a dry, clear whisper, forcing others to fall silent and pay close attention to his words. Enfeebled by age and illness, Sadric is

slowly and painfully dying, neglecting his imperial duties and retreating into a haze of pain, drugs and sorrow.

The Emperor has ruled Melniboné for almost fifty years, although he did not take a consort until more than a decade of his reign had passed. Contravening Melnibonéan tradition, Sadric did not choose to sacrifice twelve brides and grooms to ensure his own marriage's success. His consort bore him a son, the sickly Elric, but died as a result. Sadric lives only for her memory, and the faint hope that they be reunited in the afterlife. Such longings reveal the Emperor Sadric to be quite un-Melnibonéan in his thinking, a habit later evident in his unusual son.

Never in all the years of Elric's upbringing did Sadric display any emotion to his son other than a cold hatred. However, he ensured that the child was reared according to tradition, including a thorough education in every art and skill a future Emperor should need.

Sadric ensured that his wife's spirit would be safe in the Forest of Souls, beyond the far bank of the Last River, by means of a *Scroll of Dead-Speaking*. There she waits for his shade to depart this world. However, his soul is sworn to his patron, Lord Arioch of Chaos. Sadric has a plan to escape his bargain, and consequently has also pledged his soul to Mashabak of Chaos. At the moment of his death, when the two Chaos Lords appear, Sadric intends to throw a false soul before them, allowing his spirit to flee while the two Dukes of Entropy battle over what they assume to be the life-essence of Sadric the Eighty-Sixth. The success of this bold endeavor is recorded in Moorcock's novel *The Revenge of The Rose*.

## SADRIC THE EIGHTY-SIXTH, 427TH EMPEROR OF MELNIBONÉ

Chaos 500, Balance 81, Law 135  
STR 16 (10)\* CON 13 (8)\* SIZ 14 INT 29 POW 30  
DEX 18 APP 15 HP 14 (11)\*

\*shows decline in last illness.

Damage Bonus: +1D4 (none during final illness).

Weapons: Sceptre 110%, 1D6+2+1D4  
Broadsword 167%, 1D8+1+1D4+6D10  
Full Shield 160%, 22 HP + 2D10

Armor: 1D10+6 (helm on) +6D10, Meln. plate demon armor

Spells, Invocations, etc.: any in the rulesbook, plus the dragon songs, plus any the gamemaster wishes to create; Sadric can have 58 in memory.

Skills: Art (Courtly Manners) 135%, Bargain 101%, Common Tongue 60%, Dodge 65%, Evaluate 122%, Fast Talk 78%, High Speech 125%, Insight 190%, Listen 75%, Madder 41%, Melnibonéan 145%, Million Spheres 28%, Natural World 122%, Navigate 90%, Oratory 200%, Physik 50%, Potions 140%, Ride 80%, Scent/Taste 120%, Unknown Kingdoms 61%, Young Kingdoms 170%.

▲ **SADRIC'S GREATER DEMON SCEPTRE:** an ivory scepter inlaid with rubies, diamonds, and otredds. The scepter is the focus for 44 average armed bal'boosts; they wait on another plane for Sadric's call. In addition, the scepter contains one object-bound greater demon.

STR 24 CON 20 INT 28 POW 22

Abilities: Teleport, carry = to its STR

Hear, CON x5%

Knowledge, INT x3%.

▲ **SADRIC'S GREATER DEMON BROADSWORD:** of gold, and encrusted with gems and baroquely wrought fancy-work. It is very heavy as a weapon, so Sadric causes his demon to do most of the lifting.

STR 10 INT 8 POW 17

Abilities: Demon Weapon, adds 6D10

Lift, STR x3.

▲ **SADRIC'S GREATER DEMON SHIELD:** on it is blazoned Sadric's ancestor-king, first setting foot on the Dragon Isle.

Abilities: Demon Shield, adds 2D10

Dazzle, 100%.

▲ **SADRIC'S GREATER DEMON ARMOR:** it is all in what seems to be glittering black, and is said to be able to withstand even the bite of Stormbringer and Mourblade. Dragons and dragon heads are etched and sculpted in the metal, and they look out in every direction, the better to guard the embodiment of the Dragon Throne.

Abilities: Demon Armor, adds 6D10

Leap, up to 50 yards hor., 30 yds vertically

Absorb Missile, 110%.

## DIAVON SLAR

**T**HIS HALF-HUMAN bodyslave to the Emperor Sadric is a subtly powerful influence in court life. Nobles whom he dislikes often find the Emperor's favor turned away from them, and it is considered wise to bring a gift for Slar when seeking an audience with the doleful Sadric. Diavon is Sadric's closest confidante and advisor, as well as an intimate and useful assistant. He lays out the Emperor's robes, helps him dress and bathe, and stands behind the Emperor's chair at banquets. In short, he awaits Sadric's every call and serves him with what seems the utmost faith.

Diavon Slar's delicate Melnibonéan features are blended with the coarse and swarthy features of his Pikaraydian father, slave of a now dead Imrryrian princess. His hair is thick and bristling, his eyebrows a solid bar joined above his broad nose, his almost pointed ears have pronounced lobes, and his build is short and solid. Slar's Melnibonéan heritage shows in his intense eyes, high cheekbones, quick wits, and fluid grace.

When Sadric dies, Diavon Slar is 53. He flees Melniboné, stealing the carved rosewood box which holds the Emperor's real soul. Thinking to gain power over the Emperor's ghost, or to sell the soul to the Theocrat of Pan Tang, Slar's dreams are dashed when his ship is seized by Purple Towns slavers. The soulbox is lost, and Slar spends his last days laboring in a marble quarry in the highlands of the Isle of Purple Towns.

**DIAVON SLAR, bodyslave to Emperor Sadric**

Chaos 91, Balance 12, Law 41

STR 15 CON 13 SIZ 8 INT 17 POW 10  
DEX 14 APP 10 HP 11

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: Dagger 65%, damage 1D4+2

Strangle 80%, damage 1D3 (STR vs STR to break free)

Armor: none.

Spells: Demon's Ear (1), Heal (2), Refutation (1-4), Speed of Vezhan (1-3), Undo Magic (1-4), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3).

Skills: Bargain 124%, Common Tongue 85%, Conceal 65%, Dodge 60%, Etiquette 95%, Groom 98%, Insight 71%, Listen 80%, Melnibonéan 85%, Move Quietly 60%, Search 65%.

## DRAGON PRINCE ELRIC

**A**LTHOUGH NOT YET doomed or tragic, Elric is a singular and rumor-haunted individual, even upon the Dragon Isle. An albino, his eyes have irises of blood-red, and his skin and hair are white as bone. He dresses



richly, as befits a Melnibonéan prince, and always in garments of unsurpassed quality.

From his earliest day Elric has been raised to rule, and has thus been given the best education a future Emperor could have. It is his early days that Elric treasures the most, before he became aware of his father's hate for him.

Due to his physical weakness, he was unable to join his brightly sadistic playfellows at their games, and instead passed the long days in reading. Already set apart from his peers by his high station and albinism, Elric became a greater curiosity by learning more than any other of his kin for centuries. He now has a great store of learning, ranging from the secret song paths of the Dragon Isle to the spells and rituals which concern the great reptiles themselves. Such immersion in philosophy and lore has taught Elric not only sorcery—it has also planted the seeds of doubt in his mind, so that he contemplates alien concepts such as morality and guilt, issues that trouble none of the Bright Empire but himself.

Elric depends upon complex and constant draughts of magical potions. Without the drugs that keep him strong, Elric might be unable to lift his head from the pillow he rests upon. Other sorcerous draughts also keep Elric's eyes clear and his hearing sharp. He spurns the more revelatory and entertaining drugs that his kindred take constantly, distancing himself further from the introspective race he is to rule one day. Often Elric walks alone through the Imperial Palace, his friends and family lost to the world in drug-induced dreams.

Elric sleeps little, and is somewhat troubled by heights. He is often lonely, although he does not discuss this and is not really aware of the concept. He loves his father, although unhappily, savoring the rare occasions when Sadric deigns to speak with him. Elric attempts to prove his worth to Sadric through feats of sorcery and daring. As a youth not yet fifteen years of age, Elric rode naked on a dragon above the Dreaming City without girth or saddle. Far from impressed, Sadric was furious that the imperial heir had endangered himself so.

Aloof and distant, with only a small circle of true friends, Elric stands on the fringe of Imrryian life until he assumes the mantle of emperor.

## DRAGON PRINCE ELRIC OF MELNIBONÉ, heir-apparent

Chaos 125, Balance 15, Law 24

STR 15 (5)\* CON 15 (5)\* SIZ 15 INT 28 POW 35  
DEX 20 APP 11 HP 15 (10)\*

• without drugs.

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4 (or none, lacking drugs).

**Weapons:** Great Sword 80%, 2D8+1D4

Sea Axe 80%, 2D6+2+1D4

Bone Bow 80%, damage 2D6+1+1D2

Short Spear 80%, damage 1D6+1+1D4

Full Shield 80%, kb+1D4+1D4, 22 HP

**Armor:** 1D10+6 helm on, Melnibonéan plate armor

**Spells, etc:** Bounty of Straasha (4), Chain of Being (4), Flames of Kakatal (4), Gift of Grome (4), Heal (2), Hell's Armor (1-4), Refutation (1-4), Soul of Chardros (1-3), Summon Demon (1), Summon Elemental (1), Undo Magic (1-4), Wings of Lassa (4), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3); summonings, the dragon lays, invocations as the gamemaster sees fit.

**Skills:** Art (Conversation) 35%, Bargain 89%, Common Tongue 10%, Dodge 80%, Ethics 23%, Evaluate 88%, Fast Talk 47%, High Speech 75%, Insight 64%, Jump 45%, Listen 82%, Marden 7%, Melnibonéan 140%, Million Spheres 17%, Move Quietly 56%, Natural World 23%, Navigate 35%, Oratory 22%, Physik 36%, Potions 79%, Ride 64%, Sailing 25%, Scribe 48%, Search

50%, Swim 50%, Throw 42%, Trap 25%, Unknown Kingdoms 6%, Witch Sight 50%, Young Kingdoms 28%.

## TANGLEBONES

**W**HEREVER ELRIC goes, his faithful bodyslave Tanglebones goes also, unless specifically commanded otherwise by his master. He is tall and old for his 54 years, his back stooped, and his limbs gnarled and twisted from cruel labors that scarred his youthful captivity. He is of an undefinable mixture of human and Melnibonéan blood, and has a gaunt, expressive face, creased with many wrinkles. Partly bald, he shaves to stubble the little gray hair that remain. His tangled, lurching gait has a certain grace, and in fact he is a patient weaponmaster well-suited to teaching. Tanglebones taught Elric his battle-skills, training him with blades, the bow, and spears on foot or horse. (Elric learned for himself the lessons taught by history, tactics, plans, skirmishes, and diversions, from the books in his father's library.)

With his long, knotted fingers Tanglebones also attends to Elric's personal needs, assisting him with his wardrobe and day to day wishes. Tanglebones acts as butler, chamberlain, bath attendant, confidante, and valet for the albino Prince, serving him out of honest love. In many ways, Tanglebones treats Elric as if he was his own son, although always at a respectful distance.

### TANGLEBONES, bodyslave to Prince Elric

Chaos 71, Balance 87, Law 51

STR 18 CON 14 SIZ 18 INT 12 POW 10  
DEX 15 APP 7 HP 16

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6.

**Weapons:** Bone Bow 92%, damage 2D6+1 +1D3

Sea Axe 105%, damage 1D4+2 +1D6

Great Sword 127%, damage 2D8 +1D6

Full Shield 94%, damage kb+1D4+1D6, 22 hit points

Spear 110%, damage 1D6+1+1D6

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** none.

**Skills:** Common Tongue 50%, Listen 67%, Melnibonéan 65%, Respect Melnibonéans 97%, Search 45%, Scent/Taste 42%.

## DRAGON PRINCE YYRKOON

**Y**YRKOON IS COUSIN to Prince Elric, and was raised to believe that it was he who would inherit the Ruby Throne, since being so sickly Elric was not expected to reach adulthood. Yyrkoon's ambition was kindled from the beginning, and flattery surrounds him still. As Sadric deteriorates, the Ruby Throne must soon fall vacant, and Elric yet lives. Even now Yyrkoon's ambitions fester, planning foul treachery against the albino so that he might be crowned Emperor of Melniboné after all.

Yyrkoon has dark, Melnibonéan eyes and long, black hair which he keeps oiled and waved. He dresses in silks, brocades, furs, and jewels. A Dragon Prince, Yyrkoon's banner is of dark crimson, adorned with a golden dragon rampant. Yyrkoon knows himself to be darkly handsome, as well as the best noble swordsman in Imrryr. Admirers and obsequious courtiers surround him constantly.

Yyrkoon's sister Cymoril spurns him in favor of Elric, and this angers him greatly, for he loves her with an incestuous



DRAGON PRINCE YYRKOON

jealousy. It angers him that Cymoril should instead seek to dilute her blood with someone of Elric's degeneracy.

He is becoming a potent sorcerer, specializing in demons and the forces of Chaos. He delights in the pain and exploitation of his victims. Screams of pain, terror, and despair regularly echo from within Yyrkoon's pleasure chambers.

Yyrkoon is sardonic, rash, and vain. He has great pride in the traditions of his noble House. His greed and ambition spells the doom of Melniboné in the years to come.

## DRAGON PRINCE YYRKOON, The Treacherous

Chaos 95, Balance 11, Law 1

STR 16 CON 15 SIZ 16 INT 15 POW 29

DEX 14 APP 15 HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Demon Great Sword 140%, 2D8+1D4+2D10

Demon Shortsword 126%, D6+1+1D4+2D10

Sea Axe 85%, 2D6+2+1D4

Dagger 48%, 1D4+2+1D4

Full Shield 90%, kb+1D4+1D4, 22 hit points

Armor: 1D10+6 (helm on) +2D10 Meln. plate demon armor.

Spells: Curse of Chaos (4), Flames of Kakatal (4), Refutation (1-4), Soul of Chardros (1-3), Summon Demon (1), Summon Elemental (1), Undo Magic (1-4), Wings of Lassa (4), and what other magic the gamemaster desires or creates.

Skills: Art (Torture) 35%, Common Tongue 38%, Dodge 96%, Fast Talk 55%, Hide 41%, High Speech 70%, Listen 51%, Melnibonéan 75%, Million Spheres 22%, Natural World 59%, Oratory 95%, Potions 67%, Ride 48%, Search 27%, Unknown Kingdoms 1%, Witch Sight 69%, Young Kingdoms 14%.

▲ YYRKOON'S LESSER DEMON GREAT SWORD: rich opals and peryx spiral up the hilt of this golden weapon.

INT 3 POW 9

Ability: Demon Weapon, adds 2D10

▲ YYRKOON'S LESSER DEMON SHORTSWORD: has an ornately carved ivory handle into which have been hammered knots of gold.

INT 5 POW 12

Ability: Demon Weapon, adds 2D10

▲ YYRKOON'S LESSER DEMON ARMOR: black, like Elric's, and dragon-helmed.

INT 2 POW 14

Ability: Demon Armor, adds 2D10.

## PRINCESS CYMORIL

THE SLENDER, raven-haired Cymoril is a royal princess of Melniboné, although not of the same House as Prince Elric. Cymoril is Yyrkoon's sister, and forbidden by him to speak with Elric, whom she loves, or to practice sorcery. She delights in disobeying him on both counts. Like most Melnibonéan women, Cymoril is strong-willed and sure of herself. Unlike her peers, she does not paint tawdry designs upon her eyelids and cheekbones, but relies upon her natural grace and charm. She dresses most often in garments of subtle and graduated shades of blue, set off with diamonds, sapphires, and gold.

Cymoril was mischievous when she was young, and first befriended Elric when both were absconding from lessons. She accidentally encountered the young albino in a forgotten library in an abandoned wing of the Imperial Palace. Over the years, the pair's friendship has deepened into love.

Cymoril has occasional flashes of presentience. She has a questioning mind and a keen intellect, but even so is bewildered and almost frightened by the strange ideas that



Elric voices. Cymoril is fully Melnibonéan, and cannot bring herself to talk as casually as Elric does in their private conversations. She is trained in all the traditional Melnibonéan arts, and often takes drugs for the pleasures and visions they bring. Cymoril is aware that Elric finds this habit distasteful, but has vowed to maintain her independence in their relationship.

Among the few courtiers whom Elric counts as friends, Cymoril is the dearest, privy to his innermost thoughts. They have little more than a year together before Elric's fate ensnares all of Melniboné in its destructive web.

## PRINCESS CYMORIL

Chaos 30, Balance 25, Law 3

STR 12 CON 12 SIZ 10 INT 23 POW 24  
DEX 17 APP 21 HP 11

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapon: Dagger 30%, 1D4+2.

Armor: none.

Spells: Heal (2), Summon Elemental (1), Visage Of Arioch (1-3), Wings Of Lassa (4).

Skills: Art (Conversation) 90%, Art (Song) 50%, Dodge 30%, Evaluate 70%, High Speech 11%, Insight 135%, Listen 60%, Melnibonéan 115%, Million Spheres 4%, Move Quietly 30%, Natural World 35%, Physik 30%, Ride 60%, Scent/Taste 35%, Swim 60%, Witch Sight 75%, Young Kingdoms 11%.

▲ **CYMORIL'S LESSER DEMON EARRING:** Lyret, bound in a gold earring, whispers and soothes when bid.

INT 15 POW 16

Skills: Art (Conversation) 100%, Art (Courtly Manners) 100%, Art (Declaim Poetry) 100%, Art (Song) 100%, (Tell Story) 100%.

## DYVIM TVAR

HE IS ANOTHER OF Elric's close friends, the same small group that contains Cymoril and Magum Colim. The Lord of the Dragon Caves is a hereditary title, and one which Dyvim Tvar carries with pride, as his family have done for millennia. The banner of his house is a pennant bearing zigzag lines of black and yellow. His own device is of a dormant blue dragon on a white field. It is Dyvim Tvar's custom to dress in clothes of white or pale yellow. He is older than Elric, but his mother and Elric's were cousins, and princesses both. Dyvim Tvar has two mistresses, and each has borne him a son.

He is pragmatic, level-headed, and a fine battle-commander. The massed troops of the Dragon Isle are his charge, and he is versed in military lore as well as the rituals of the Dragon Caves. Dyvim Tvar spends much of his time in the caverns where his vast, reptilian charges slumber.

Although he dreams of Melniboné's glorious past, Dyvim Tvar has vague fears for the future of his nation and people.

## BATTLE COMMANDER DYVIM TVAR, Lord of the Dragon Caves

Chaos 128, Balance 68, Law 23

STR 18 CON 17 SIZ 17 INT 24 POW 24  
DEX 13 APP 16 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D6.

Weapons: Bone Bow 130%, 2D6+1+1D3

Battle Axe 125%, 1D8+2+1D6

Great Sword 135%, 2D8+1D6

Shortsword 124%, 1D6+1+1D6

Armor: 1D10+6 (helm on) +2D10, Meln. plate demon armor.

Spells: Demon's Eye (1), Flames of Kakatal (4), Hell's Armor (1-4), Hell's Razor (1-4), Sinew of Chardros (1-3), Summon Demon (1), Summon Elemental (1) Wings of Lassa (4), the dragon lays, and whatever magic the gamemaster desires.

Skills: Art (Lute) 49%, Bargain 40%, Climb 60%, Common Tongue 21%, Dodge 65%, Evaluate 59%, Fast Talk 102%, Hide 66%, High Speech 18%, Insight 32%, Jump 57%, Listen 40%, Melnibonéan 120%, Million Spheres 05%, Move Quietly 40%, Natural World 33%, Navigate 33%, Oratory 72%, Physik 40%, Ride 80%, Ride Dragon 89%, Search 50%, Sound the Dragon-Horn 79%, Swim 67%, Throw 70%, Witch Sight 40%, Young Kingdoms 23%.

▲ **DYVIM TVAR'S LESSER DEMON ARMOR:** black steel armor, chased with red dragons.

INT 7 POW 11

Ability: *Demon Armor*, adds 2D10.

## MAGUM COLIM

MAGUM COLIM WILL soon become Grand Admiral of the Imrryrian Navy. He is proud, resourceful and dignified, tall and slender, often clad in fanciful sea-green armor. His eyes are deep blue, almost purple, and he has a fine, floating mane of hair.

Despite their difference in age, Colim is among the albino prince's closest companions at court. He is also one of Emperor Sadric's most trusted advisers, and has long been a familiar sight around the Ruby Throne. He is personally responsible for Prince Elric's considerable knowledge of Melniboné's fleet, having early noticed the sickly child's thirst for learning.

Admiral Colim is a master tactician, and has won every sea battle in which he has fought. As Grand Admiral, he'll command the navy from the battle-barge flagship, *The Son Of Pyaray*.

He staunchly upholds Melniboné and her traditions, and despises Yyrkoon and his ilk. Although Colim doubts that Elric makes a fit heir apparent, he keeps such thoughts to himself, recognizing the albino's right to inherit the Ruby Throne.

## ADMIRAL MAGUM COLIM

Chaos 120, Balance 61, Law 78

STR 13 CON 13 SIZ 15 INT 22 POW 23  
DEX 13 APP 15 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Short Spear 110%, damage 1D6+1+1D4+3D10+1D4

Bone Bow 85%, 2D6+1+1D2

Sea Axe 93%, 2D6+2+1D4

Armor: 1D10+6 (helm on), Melnibonéan plate armor

Spells: Bounty of Straasha (4), Demon's Eye (1), Hell's Razor (1-4), Midnight (1), Wings of Lassa (4).

Skills: Bargain 75%, Climb 43%, Common Tongue 50%, Evaluate 57%, High Speech 17%, Insight 40%, Melnibonéan 110%, Natural World 65%, Naval Tactics 110%, Navigate 92%, Physik 73%, Sailing 90%, Search 49%, Swim 60%, Young Kingdoms 35%.

**MAGUM COLIM'S GREATER DEMON SPEAR:** in place of an ordinary point, its wicked head is shaped and painted like a flying fish. Thrown, it wings back after hitting the target, returning to Magum Colim.

STR 8 CON 21 SIZ 3 INT 5 POW 17  
DEX 12 MOV 15 HP 11

Abilities: *Demon Weapon*, adds 3D10+1D4  
*Wings*, automatic.

## DOCTOR JEST

**D**OCTOR JEST is tall and cadaverous, lithe and full of a quick, feral energy. Everything about him is thin, from his cruel lips and slim fingers to his fine hair and rushing, sibilant whisper. His hair, skin and eyes are all pale. Doctor Jest wears bloodstained garments of white when about his work. At court functions he dresses in elegant finery of red velvet adorned with black lace and needlepoint. The Chief Interrogator of the Dragon Isle, Doctor Jest spends so much time in the cells and torture chambers beneath the Tower Of Monshanjik that he is unused to bright light, squinting at anything brighter than a torch.

He is a consummate master of the arts of agony, dancing about his pain-wracked charges with the skill of an artist. No human who visits Imrryr willingly makes his acquaintance. Appointed to his position two or three years ago by the Emperor Sadric, Doctor Jest is an enigmatic presence beside the Ruby Throne. His allegiances are unknown, his desires unspoken. Only the sleek, swift subtleties of pain rouse excitement and pleasure in his cold, pale eyes.

**DOCTOR JEST, Imperial Inquisitor General**  
Chaos 320, Balance 19, Law 144

STR 15 CON 12 SIZ 16 INT 23 POW 23  
DEX 20 APP 10 HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Dagger 70%, damage 1D4+2+1D4  
Glass Slivers 181%, damage excruciating pain  
Needles 219%, damage 1 CON nerve damage with critical  
Scalpel 129%, damage 1D4

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** Bonds Unbreakable (3), Heal (2), Hell's Razor (1-4),  
Make Fast (1), Suppleness of Xiombarg (1-3).

**Skills:** Art (Conversation) 57%, Art (Torture) 229%, Common  
Tongue 70%, Enjoy Life 43%, Fast Talk 61%, High Speech 21%,  
Insight 101%, Listen 75%, Madder 24%, Melnibonéan 115%,  
Natural World 60%, Oratory 58%, Physik 79%, Potions 25%,  
Scent/Taste 60%, Scribe 78%, Young Kingdoms 24%.

▲ **DOCTOR JEST'S GREATER DEMON GLOVE:** a finely-woven black leather glove that squeaks constantly when moving. Bound within it is a dhazuline demon, who enhances Dr. Jest's already superbly gruesome technique by playing upon specific nerve fibers of the screaming victims.

STR 13 CON 17 SIZ 2 INT 11 POW 23  
DEX 16 HP 10

**Abilities:** Drain Soul, POW:POW  
Manipulate, at 120%, agonizes individual nerves  
Paralyze, CON:CON  
Suture, heals 2 HP and scars the target ☼





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# MELNIBONÉAN THEOLOGY AND COSMOLOGY

## BELIEFS CONCERNING CHAOS, THE BALANCE, LAW, THE ELEMENTAL RULERS, AND THE PLANT AND BEAST LORDS

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**T**HE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS of the Bright Empire wax and wane with Melniboné's fortunes. Ten thousand years ago Arioch first turned his fickle gaze upon the Dragon Isle and became its patron and demon god. Chaos was strong in those days, and under its aegis so too became Melniboné. Magic is the essence of Chaos, and through their worship of Chaos the Melnibonéans became potent wielders of sorcery, summoning demons and conquering other worlds.

Arioch has not manifested upon the Dragon Isle for five hundred years, and the Lords of Disorder no longer bestow their blessings upon the Melnibonéan race. Magic goes awry. The great rituals no longer produce the results of old. Ancient spells and bindings fray. Yet Melnibonéan concern at this decay always fades into slothful, drug-induced apathy.

This narcotic laze consumes Melniboné's church as it does her people. Religious beliefs are lost amidst the opiate languor which passes for activity in the Dreaming City. As the people became lost in their dreams, they lost faith in their gods. Melnibonéan religion was once a vital and colorful pageant of ritual and faith. When the Bright Empire was at her peak none needed proof that the Lords of Chaos existed, for many a time in Melniboné's reign the Dukes of Entropy walked Imrryr's halls, and the evidence of sorcery was there for all to see. Without Arioch's blessing, and without him and his fellow Lords of Chaos ceasing to manifest in all their inhuman glory, Melnibonéans have turned away from active worship of Chaos. Religion became abstracted from day-to-day life, and hollow traditions replaced zealous belief in Chaos.

### THE BALANCE

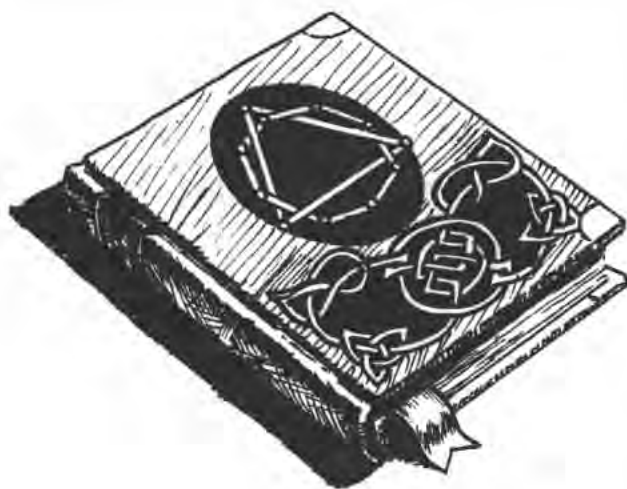
**W**HEN THE MELNIBONÉANS first arrived upon the earth as cosmic wanderers, they served the Cosmic Balance. The Balance is omnipotent but non-directive, and its power is strong only when enough believed in—then it is mightier than Law and Chaos combined. The Sanctuary of the Balance is said to be at the core of the multiverse, and the worlds wherein it reigns unhindered are scattered among the Million Spheres. Although Law and Chaos must obey the Balance, both would overthrow it if they could. The Cosmic Balance represents the

ebb and flux of tides, the turn of time and the change of the seasons. It is a natural symmetry, a gentle and gradual force which creates, supports, and adores all forms of life throughout the multiverse.

Melnibonéan legend has it that the voice of the Balance spoke only once, at the beginning of time. After ordering the Lords of Law and Chaos and instructing them in the ordering of the multiverse, it fell silent. Since then the Balance has observed, acting only when its equilibrium is threatened. Both the melancholy giant Mordaga and mad, bad Prince Gaynor the Damned were once servants of the Balance, each punished when they betrayed it. In Mordaga's case, he tried to wrest the Balance from the Cosmic Hand, and was banished to earth to await his eventual doom.

The Balance is more an abstract power than a supreme consciousness, the endless metamorphosis between birth and death, light and dark, Law and Chaos. It is a harmonious anarchy. From the Cosmic Balance came the multiverse. Only the Balance can create new worlds and new sorts of life. Every





original thought is said to come from the Balance. The endless mockeries of Chaos merely alter and rearrange that which is already created, while Law strives for sparse perfection upon a single theme.

When the Melnibonéans abandoned the Balance for the bright promises of Chaos, they traded peace for power, and satisfaction for hunger. Largely unchecked, Chaos increased in the world. Humanity provided a five-hundred-year pause with its worship of the Lords of Law, in part causing Melniboné's decay. In years to come, the Balance tips far enough to allow Chaos to breach the Lawful barrier surrounding the earth, flooding through it to devour the world and reign triumphant (as described in Moorcock's *Stormbringer*). Only by the destruction of this world and the beginning of the next can the Balance reassert itself.

## THE ELEMENTALS

**E**LEMENTAL POWER HAS been reduced in the last five hundred years. In its place, Law has gradually increased its reign, thanks to humanity's constant prayers and ordered systems of belief.

The planes of all four elements intersect with that of earth, but the kinship between Melnibonéans and water elementals is closest. There are ancient legends on the Dragon Isle which intimate that it was from the sea that Melnibonéans had their ultimate birth, and perhaps it is for this reason that Straasha has allied himself with the Dragon Princes.

Much Melnibonéan sorcery revolves around the commanding of elementals, who are friendlier and more responsive than demons. While elementals must be placated and convinced to carry out a task when summoned, they are much less demanding than demons. Demons usually require one or more souls, but elementals have simpler tastes. The scent of a fresh-picked rose is often sufficient for an air elemental. Earth elementals are satisfied by the taste of a rare mineral. Water elementals like to absorb the freshness of rain or melting snow. Fire

elementals delight in burning substances rarely available to them, such as silks, artwork, and documents. The pacts of mutual aid sworn long ago between Emperors of Melniboné and the Elemental Rulers ensure that elementals are normally amicable toward their Melnibonéan summoners.

Humans often worshiped the elemental rulers, but Melnibonéans see them more as equals, another race but not a greater one. Because of fear and ignorance, humans see elementals as supernatural, things more powerful and more demanding than the world to which they are intrinsic. When Melnibonéans worshipped the Cosmic Balance, they were at one with the multiverse, and as such recognized the essence of the elementals, realizing that they are central to the very nature of the inhabitable worlds.

Elementals are the summary consciousnesses of natural events. After another Time Cycle, they mostly will no longer exist, but their propensities will survive, as natural law. Without the inherent liveliness of the natural forces, elementals could not and would not exist.

Lesser elementals have limited awareness and little sense of time. They are far more rudimentary than the Elemental Rulers, and the two are far more different in degree than adult and child. Elementals once had the potential to grow and mature, just as an acorn grows into an oak, or a river into a sea, but the War of the Elements ended that. Now the status of every elementals is fixed and, though they can die, new ones cannot be born or created.

## BEAST-LORDS, PLANT-LORDS

**T**HESE ENTITIES DRAW their essence from, and recreate the essence of the broad sorts of earthly life. They are not archetypes, since each is potentially summonable, and since each encompasses many similar species, yet our perceptions of them draws us always toward that conclusion.

The Plant-Lords are not worshiped at all in the Young Kingdoms, whereas farmers are known to placate the Beast-Lords through prayer and sacrifice in order to assure the strength of their herds. On Melniboné, as the Bright Empire lost much of its lore, knowledge of the Plant-Lords was largely forgotten. Elric's summoning of the Tangled Woman, Lady Briar, in *The Revenge of the Rose*, is the first such summoning for many thousands of years.

Like their elemental kindred, Plant-Lords and Beast-Lords were never worshiped on Melniboné, although their power was recognized by its inhuman people. Melnibonéan legends refer to a time when the Beast- and Plant-Lords were ordered by Law and Chaos. Their behavior and thoughts were laid down within their minds, set and unchangeable. Once programmed, they were dismissed to dwell within their half-worlds about the earth. It is unknown whether each world in the multiverse has its own set of Lords, or if one set does for all.

Great and terrible pacts were forged with many of these demi-gods by the Emperors of the Dragon Isle, long before Elric's time. The actorios stone, worn by all Melnibonéan emperors in the Ring of Kings, is a symbol of these ancient bargains, and guarantees the aid of the Beast-Lords to its wearer.

Promises were sworn by the Melnibonéans in return for these services. For example, they swore to Lady Fileet that no



# COSMOLOGY



A MELNIBONÉAN CONTEMPLATING THE BEAUTY THAT LIES IN CHAOS.

Melnibonéan should ever harm one of her feathered children. In Imrryr only slaves may kill a bird and never within the city walls, although the reason for the law is almost forgotten. The pact between Melnibonéans and Meerclaw of Cats was made before the Melnibonéans even arrived on earth. Cats and Melnibonéans share certain qualities of pleasure, cruelty, and sophistication.

Many other bargains, strange, sinister, and whimsical, were to guarantee the Beast-Lords' aid in the millennia to come. These bargains, a thousand years ago, saved Melniboné from defeat at the hands of the Dharzi.



## LAW AND CHAOS

**L**ONG, LONG AGO, when the multiverse was young and Melniboné was not even a dream, the Lords of Law and Chaos were known by one name, and were inhabitants of a single world. They gave shape to the multiverse, and ordered its worlds and creatures at the command of the Cosmic Balance. When and how the Lords of the Higher Worlds became separated into the forces of Law and Chaos is unknown.

Since the civil war which destroyed H'hui'shan, the Lords of Chaos have been worshiped upon Melniboné as gods. Because Melnibonéans are not human, and do not possess the human trait of morality, they do not see Chaos as evil. Evil is indeed a part of the nature of Chaos, but in its wild freedom of form and structure Chaos embraces all aspects of possibility, from random destruction to beautiful creation. Melnibonéans revere Chaos for its feyness and destructive freedom. Only humans, blinded by their emotions, perceive the forces of Chaos as being intrinsically harmful or malevolent. Because the sorcerers of Pan Tang are a human race, the Lords of Chaos express only their evil side upon that grim isle.

Law is the opposition of Chaos. To the ordinary human, Law represents good to Chaos' evil; the truth is far more complex and much less dualistic. Whereas Chaos decries stillness, Law treasures it. The symbol of the Lords of Law is a single arrow, representing upward dynamic growth, the path to perfection, while the eight arrows of Chaos, radiating outward from a central point, represent endless possibility and infinite change. World by world, Law and Chaos alike seek to eliminate the other's rule, so that only Law or only Chaos rules a sphere supreme.

Once Law or Chaos is established upon a plane, the force subtly increases strength with the aim of dominating the entire plane. Chaos claims that ultimate Law represents the stagnation of perfection. Law argues that the creativity of

Chaos represents mere sterile and pointless rearrangement. In truth, neither can exist without the other. Even though the Cosmic Balance tilts to grant one or the other the upper hand in the endless struggle, neither can ever truly win.

Both the Lords of Law and Chaos must obey the great edict of the Cosmic Balance, which forbids them to interfere directly with human affairs, forcing them use human agents on earth. It is in the nature of Chaos to seek ways of avoiding and circumventing this rule. Law has sworn to let humanity forge its own destiny, though it feels free to intervene against agents of Chaos.

When a Lord of Law or Chaos manifests upon a world, it is never with full energy. A fraction of the god's self is extruded to earth from whatever plane the deity inhabits, and by the decree of the Balance each is forbidden to fully manifest upon any plane save their own.

No summoning can ever force to appear a Lord of Law or of Chaos if they do not wish to come. The Lords of Law adopt human bodies of impossible perfection when they manifest upon the earth. The Lords of Chaos choose bodies similar to Melnibonéans, but far more beautiful. Humans see each Lord of Chaos in whatever form they expect to see. Given the standard human expectations of Chaos, the Lords of Randomness are often hideous and terrible to behold.

Lawful or Chaotic, all the Lords of the Higher Worlds agree that the humblest human is harder to please than any god.

## THE GODS OF CHAOS

**T**HE CATHEDRAL OF CHAOS in Imrryr is collapsing slowly into ruin. Statues of the Lords of Chaos stand amidst cobwebs and decay. Worshipers are few and far between. Melnibonéan religion has undergone great change since those first, glorious years when Arioch became patron of the Bright Empire.

Melnibonéans recognize a pantheon of Chaos. The three oldest and mightiest of all the Lords are deathly Chardros with his scythe, Mabelode Sword-King with his face in shadow, and Slortar the Beautiful, whom ancient grimoires call the oldest god of all. A second trio of terrible gods is led by Duke Arioch of the Seven Darks, who is the Keeper of the Black Swords and the Patron of the Dragon Isle. His two companions are Six-Breasted Arnara of Unmatched Eroticism, a goddess of sensuality and fertility, and Pyaray of the Deeps, the Tentacled Whisperer of Impossible Secrets.

Lesser Chaos deities have smaller shrines and statuettes in alcoves about the Cathedral of Chaos. These include Haborym of the Fires which Destroy; Voroorn, another Lord of the Darks; Saebos and Aesma, the Twins of Destruction and Creation; sweet Balaan, the Bringer of Heightened Sensation (twisted into a foul god of torture upon Pan Tang, there worshipped as Balan the Grim); sexless Xiombarg, male or female at will, an unholy temptress; Lady Marthim; Verdelet the Devourer; the infernal Dukes Malohin and Zhortra; and countless others.

Balo the Jester is not worshiped. In Melnibonéan theology he is neither a Lord of Chaos or a Lord of Law, but instead moves between both factions at will.



## BELIEFS

**U**PON MELNIBONÉ it is widely held that Chaos created the earth and ruled it until Law's powers became too great. Thereafter Law ruled the land and Chaos ruled the seas. The shallows of the oceans are disputed territory, between Straasha the Sea-King and the Chaos Fleets of Pyaray.

Melnibonéan religion is complex, involving a variety of afterlives from which a soul may or may not be spared, depending on the manner of its death and the way it lived. Many Melnibonéan afterlives are in fact other planes, to which souls travel after death to serve the whims of their patron demon. Only Emperors are said to be spared this fate. Their shades inhabit a ghost of Imrryr, her glory unfaded, there to dwell until the Dreaming City herself falls, although this may be nothing but a hopeful fancy.

On Melniboné death is considered a transition, a Last River leading to a variety of heavens and hells. Upon the far bank of the Last River grows the Forest of Souls, a place of peace where neither Law nor Chaos hold sway. Few spirits are powerful enough to reach this sweet eternity. Many souls, such

as the slave caste of the Dreaming City, spend their entire afterlife trapped upon the Last River, an endless journey in pursuit of whatever they most lacked in life, be it happiness, love or even goodwill. The Last River is spoken of as a kind of Limbo, although the true Limbo is a place much worse, a timeless plane of perpetual chill inhabited by cold ghouls, ice hounds, and much worse. Powerful sorcerers can sometimes contact the souls of the dead and summon them from whatever plane they now dwell on, much as one might summon a demon, although such necromantic practices are the sphere of only the greatest practitioners of the magical arts.

Followers of Law on earth believe that the world's boundaries are set and unchangeable, and that the world is the only ordered matter in a swirling sea of Chaos stuff. Those who faithfully follow the tenets of Law will be spared dissolution in Chaos after death, to be reborn into the world again and again until their spirits attain the purity of perfect Law and achieve oneness with the White Lords. Followers of Chaos decree that the world can be reshaped by the power of belief, and that after death especially powerful souls may become demons or otherwise join with Chaos. ☉



# ENCOUNTERS ON MELNIBONÉ

**M**ELNIBONÉ OFFERS many opportunities to meet people, buy or sell goods, explore lurid places, and flee imminent doom. The following encounter tables may help when the adventurers venture abroad in Melniboné. They can add spice to an otherwise normal situation or inspire an abnormal equivalent. Do not by any means feel restricted. If the dice don't offer an interesting result, reroll or simply choose a better one.

Short descriptions of each encounter type follow the tables. These paragraphs suggest ways to use the encounter in an adventure. A rolled encounter may fill an entire play session, given inspiration and willing players.

The *Melniboné Digest* chapter gives statistics for most of these encounters. Adjust the listed statistics to suit the adventurers' abilities.

## IN IMRRYR

**EMPEROR ALONE:** Sadric walks without slaves, guards, or fawning courtiers, perhaps to mourn for his dead wife, perhaps to spy maliciously upon his citizens. Disease-ridden and dying, his cadaverous figure hobbles everywhere without fear.

**EMPEROR AND RETINUE:** when the Emperor passes in state, all must kneel, even the beasts. Chiming bells and harps and singing slaves sound before him, and guards in flapping yellow cloaks march before and behind. Jewels glint in the sunlight. Elementals accompany the cavalcade, unseen but felt as ripples of passing power that puts every hair a-prickle.

**PRIEST:** someone bereft of meaning because the Lords of Chaos took away all blessings five hundred years ago. Mad-eyed, hollow cheeked and desperate, wrapped in tattered finery, or an austere, yellow-robed, rapturous aesthete. The priest seeks to debate world views with the adventurers, or sneers at their paltry religion. Perhaps they have a task—herb gathering, a request to borrow a book or trinket from a friend—which they are too rari-fied to attempt and brusquely delegate it to the nearest human.

**NOBLE:** riding a demonic steed, reclining on a sedan chair drawn by drugged slaves, or a group, strolling and whispering together. They may be Melnibonéan nobles drawn from the Elric aaga, such as Yyrkoon, or Dyvim Slorm. Two bored Melnibonéan

## IMRRYR ENCOUNTERS TABLE

1D100	Encounter
01	Emperor Alone
02	Emperor and Retinue
03-05	Priest
06-15	Noble
16-20	Sorcerer
21-25	Scholar
26-27	Plotter
28	Aesthete
31-35	Imperial Guard
36-40	Silent Guard
41-45	Eagle Guard
46-60	Slave Group
61-75	Single Slave
76-78	Foreigner
79-80	Execution
81-85	Demon
86-90	Elemental
91-95	Magic
96-99	Wonder
00	Special Encounter

youths may use the adventurers as pawns in a bet. A particularly sensitive noble may swoon from the shock if spoken to directly by the adventurers, or order them arrested on the spot, or just sniff and sneer at them.

**SORCERER:** sorcerers are more languorous and disinterested than their fellow Melnibonéans. Sorcerer plots are generally drawn out, ingenious, and designed toward a fittingly aesthetic conclusion. Adventurers may enter at any point and fail to see the meaning of what's happening. A sorcerer may assign such tasks as the discovery and delivery of something, be it the answer to a



riddle, a nonsense rhyme, a demon (bound or unbound, or in the process of unbinding), a carnivorous flower or other outré object, to a lover, a rival, or a third party who knows nothing about the delivery.

**SCHOLAR:** an earnest student of literature, with inky ledgers and vacant, dream-filled gaze. Decadent Imrryr despises scholars, since any with real talent choose to study magic, not history. Scholars, like sorcerers, may send the adventurers on a quest after a rare treatise, but most lack sorcerers' knowledge of the world. In Melniboné such naivete can kill the enquirer, or at least his or her employees.

**PLOTTER:** the adventurers could be drawn into some plot between the factions that spring up once the indifferent Elric ascends to the Ruby Throne. Each faction would be headed by one of the nobles mentioned in the Elric saga. Perhaps one faction gives the adventurers the task of revealing a secretive and rival leader.

**AESTHETE:** such people outdo even the priests of Chaos in their diligent search for pure experience. Conscious pleasure in Melniboné encompasses not only ordinary satisfactions and slave-craft such as painting, sculpture, and architecture, but also personal manners, poise, and aesthetic conduct, and frequently the vicarious emotions shared by an audience viewing ecstasy and pain. Perhaps an aesthete wishes to involve the adventurers in his or her experiments with living body sculpture, and must be persuaded that they are unfit material. Perhaps an aesthete desires a merchant adventurer to provide a particular ingredient or slave to stoke a jaded appetite. Perhaps the adventurers prove sufficiently mannered so that an aesthete invites them to view his or her collection of something. Imrryr's supreme aesthete is probably Doctor Jest.

**IMPERIAL GUARD:** yellow-cloaked, kilted, in sandals, breastplates, and helmets, and carrying short swords. Despite their lofty name, the Imperial Guards are the ordinary garrison troops of Imrryr. They are mostly foot soldiers, with a squadron or two of cavalry. They patrol the walls of the city and the city's streets, and act as soldiers or police as the situation demands. In ancient days, the massed legions of the Imperial Guard marched across many worlds, not just this one. Today the troops are mainly half-bloods, though the officers are always lesser members of the Melnibonéan nobility. Their rivals of long standing are the Eagle Guard. A clever ruse is to play off the Imperials against the Eagle Guard.

**EAGLE GUARD:** they patrol the harbor and palace, but take little interest in events in Imrryr unless the Emperor is threatened. A crack unit, the Eagle Knights, serve as the Emperor's body-guard. All members of the Eagle Guard wear white feather cloaks over their armor, but only the cloaks of the Eagle Knights grant the power of brief fluttering flight for short distances. The Eagle Guard ignore small fry such as adventurers, leaving them to be apprehended by the inferior Imperial Guard. They will order adventurers to wait where they are rather than to arrest them, but the Imperial Guard is sometimes slow to respond. All members of the Eagle Guard are full Melnibonéans.

**SILENT GUARD:** these eunuch archers are elite troops who never leave the Palace save at the Emperor's command. Muted as well as castrated, these half-caste slaves served faithfully to earn the drugs they crave. A solitary Silent Guard might roam Imrryr mourning his lost manhood, carrying out a decree from Sadric, or pursuing some more sinister goal.



**SLAVE GROUP:** being marched to the harbor or to repair a street, and overseen by a half-breed who defers only to Melnibonéans. Dead slaves are not buried but flung into the harbor, where they float briefly before being swallowed by the small, eel-like sea-serpents there, the pets of powerful nobles. Occasionally the tide sends whole schools of dead humans to bob beside an incoming ship. The drugs that keep the slaves content also sap their will and intellect, so they pay no heed.

**SINGLE SLAVE:** on an errand for his or her master, the slave sneers at or ignores the adventurers as inferiors; or running away, in which case he begs for help. The same slave may one day jeer at the adventurers, and the next day appeal for rescue. Usually an elite half-blood, as these are the only ones who can conquer the enervating effects of Melnibonéan slave drugs.

**FOREIGNER:** a scholar who has received special dispensation to enter the Dreaming City in search of arcane wisdom; in the harbor, a merchant, a sailor, trader, explorer, or a drug-dealer with hollow eyes and nervous hands. Perhaps the foreigner seeks a patron—preferably Melnibonéan, but a wealthy adventurer would do—"Have I, or have I not, got a deal for you!"

**EXECUTION:** a recalcitrant slave or a foreigner who broke the Harbor Edicts. Never so simple as a hanging or burning, Melnibonéan executions are sadistic, inventive, spectacular, and extended.

**DEMON:** greater and lesser demons hurry about the city on varying tasks for their masters, or are bound into objects both splendid and ordinary, treasured in a noble's hoard, or lost in a dark corner. Adventurers can never be sure that objects, animals, or slaves are not simply a disguise for a baleful power that if provoked, or at the bidding of its master, could do them harm. Demons, like slaves, might appeal to the adventurers to help them from Melniboné, feigning subservience until far from the Dragon Isle, when they plot to overcome their new masters.

**ELEMENTAL:** elementals work around the city in manners similar to those of demons. Springs of pure water bubble from the ocean. A garden flourishes while rooted in solid stone. Adventurers are enlisted to help launch a patently non-aerodynamic craft built by a mad eccentric, which is borne upwards upon the wings

of the air. A small child builds elaborate sand castles on the shore without lifting a finger.

**MAGIC:** a group, or a single person flying overhead held aloft by elementals, or flung out of a tower window by a magical explosion. The adventurers get caught up in a magical duel, or in the search for some special ingredient for a spell or potion.

**WONDER:** in Imrryr, wonders are commonplace. This is a sight to make a human's jaw drop, but likely to raise little more than a polite yawn from a local. Examples are a waterfall cascading from mid-air, a flight of crystal birds, a blizzard of sweet-smelling petals, a singing building, a conjuring of emerald mirrors, or a great golden battle-barge gliding between Imrryr's towers.

**SPECIAL ENCOUNTER:** a visit from an Elemental Ruler, a Beast-Lord, or a lesser Chaotic power such as a demon whose summoner failed in binding but who agrees to depart peacefully after a tour of the city; dragons flying overhead in formation; a dragon landing by, or on, the adventurers; some other-dimensional manifestation of the Eternal Champion; two battle barges holding real combat in the harbor for the entertainment of the Emperor.

## ON THE ISLAND

**NOBLE(S):** very rare. Perhaps for a particularly intricate plot, or a picnic in the antique style where revellers, drugged and indolent, loll beneath their pavilion amidst the remnants of their meal; a tender lovers' tryst, or a terminal attack of self loathing, both leading to resentment of intruders.

**SLAVES:** sent at certain times of the year to gather drug-yielding plants and fungi, wildflowers, or animals. Overseen by a half-blood, or on occasion by their master.

**SORCERER:** solitary, or with a group of friends and slaves, either to observe a rare conjunction of stars, worlds, or planes, or for a special appeasement of Lord of Chaos, Beast-Lord, or Elemental Ruler that cannot be undertaken in the city. Perhaps the sorcerer must gather a herb under particular and exactly observed conditions that could not be entrusted to slaves. (Circumstances



## ISLAND ENCOUNTERS TABLE

1D100	Encounter
01-05	Noble(s)
06-35	Slaves
36-37	Sorcerer
38-40	Foreigners
41-50	Creature
51-55	Demon
56-65	Elemental
66-67	Ghost
68-77	Ruin
78-89	Weather
90-94	Magic
95-98	Wonder
99	Other Plane
00	Special Encounter

so bizarre, or a sorcerer so paranoid cannot bode well for the adventurers.)

**FOREIGNERS:** what would foreigners be doing wandering the Dreaming Isle? See 'A Sojourner's Guide' for clues. Otherwise they could be searching for one of the many treasures said to be concealed upon the island, such as the prism that turns moonlight into silver by the Lake of Moon. They could be spies, explorers, tourists, researchers, or fellow adventurers seeking thrills in this place of ghosts and mysteries.

**CREATURE:** one or more natural Melnibonéan animals, altered owing to the Chaotic whim of the isle: a herd of milk white deer with golden collars or splendid charcoal brood mares with silver foals; a family of otters whose fur is flecked with precious jewels from the lost, subterranean treasure chamber of which their holt is made; a wild boar who leads its hunters on an extended chase, and is finally bailed up in a ruinous tower.

**DEMON:** adventurers may have to rescue some slaves or a picnicking party, or defend themselves from a demon, either unprovoked or sent by an enemy to the adventurers or those being attacked. For honor's sake, such an attack demands retaliation. A Knowledge demon attacks verbally, viciously insulting the adventurer's appearance, ability, intelligence, and legitimacy.

**ELEMENTAL:** elementals seem to desire most to be left alone; unbound and distinguishable elementals are extremely rare. A group of air elementals is summoned to change the weather, water elementals chuckle in the springs they have created. Adventurers are unlikely to actively encounter them, but their unseen presence adds piquancy to any scene.

**GHOST:** it haunts because it has some task left unfinished on this earth. The spirit could date from time immemorial, or it could be new-born yesterday; it bids them finish the task or face supernatural vengeance. Such a task could be simple or impossible and its threats deadly or hollow. Tasks might range from telling a woman dead a thousand years ago that the lingering shade loves her still, to gathering its bones at another resting place, destroying its murderer or descendants thereof, or flinging 20 living souls from the highest spire of Imrryr.

# ENCOUNTERS ON MELNIBONÉ

**RUIN:** A crumbling, weed-choked tower, lost to time and the devouring plant growth. Perhaps a staircase leads upward or down, some grimoire waiting to be discovered, a ghost or demon to be unleashed. Perhaps it is a folly designed to look antique to please the whim of its builder, so that adventurers, thinking to harmlessly explore, stumble into a well-appointed country residence and its displeased owner.

**WEATHER:** a dramatic change of weather, to fog, blizzard, excessive heat, drizzle, a wintry blast of ice-laden wind, or a rain of trout or shoes.

**MAGIC:** a shimmering mirage, a mandrake root, a danger concealed by illusion, the effects of some spell in progress on the land's surface or stability, or a vegetative wyrd that slowly strangles trees.

**WONDER:** a lake without bottom, an animal with a human attribute such as hands, eyes or voice, an incongruous object such

as a bridge in the middle of a field, or a block of ice that never melts. Such could be the object of an adventurer's quest.

**OTHER PLANE:** the ancient ley-lines of Melniboné have led the traveler onto another plane, or brought a part of that plane to the Dragon Isle. This other plane fades away after a short period, unless an adventurer fumbles a Luck roll, whereupon the luckless toy of Fate is trapped there permanently.

**SPECIAL ENCOUNTER:** the visitation of a Beast-Lord or Elemental Ruler has a different effect in the country than in the city. The adventurers might stumble across a place where such presences manifest, a glade festooned with ribands of bees and fireflies, or filled with slow vegetative or reptilian energy. They may unwittingly anger such a power by killing a favored beast or follower, and have to fulfil a geas, or a task, or take up a burden or a curse to appease it. ☉





# MELNIBONÉ DIGEST

**H**ERE ARE PROVIDED grouped and individual statistics for residents of Melniboné. These can be used in conjunction with the encounter tables. Gamemasters will find this section useful for spontaneous mini-adventures and momentary encounters, as well as a point of reference for other scenarios in this book.

Few demons appear in these statistics, as few are bound nowadays on Melniboné. Such demons that exist are in ancient artifacts, handed down through the noble houses. In some cases the demons have long since expired, or gone insane, or simply ceased to function.

Elementals are also rarely bound, but are instead summoned as needed. Such summonings take only one round, due to the ancient pacts between the elemental rulers and the people of Melniboné.

## SOLDIERS AND WARRIORS

**T**HERE ARE MANY Melnibonéan warriors, of varying castes and kinds. Five martial orders are given here. The Eagle Guard watch over Imrryr, and the elite Eagle Knights guard the city's most sacred places. The Imperial Guard form the bulk of the regular legions, and the Silent Guard support them in the field. The Imrryrian Lancers are a cavalry unit from the Imperial Guard.

### EAGLE GUARD

The Eagle Guard was originally established to ensure that Lady Fileet's Law was upheld: that none of Melnibonéan blood would ever slay a bird. Over time the Eagle Guard evolved to fulfill a more generalized police role. They have superior rank to any in the Imperial Guard, but their authority does not extend outside the walls of Imrryr. All warriors of the Eagle Guard wear crested helmets and feathered cloaks.

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Long Spear 100%, damage 1D10+1+1D4  
Broadsword 90%, damage 1D8+1+1D4  
Dagger 75%, damage 1D4+2+1D4

**Armor:** 1D8+3 (helm on), Melnibonéan Half Plate.

**Spells:** Bonds Unbreakable (3), Hell's Armor (1-4), Hell's Sharp Flame (1-4), Summon Elemental (1), Suppleness of Xiombarg (1-4), Speed of Vezhan (1-3), Wings of Lassa (4).

**Skills:** Common Tongue 70%, Dodge 85%, Listen 70%, Melnibonéan 100%, Move Quietly 80%, Search 75%, Track 65%, Witch Sight 50%.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
ONE	15	12	12	12	25	12
TWO	12	18	13	13	24	16
THREE	13	17	12	19	17	15
FOUR	11	10	15	12	24	13
FIVE	12	14	16	20	23	15
SIX	12	15	13	15	22	14
SEVEN	18	14	12	16	24	13
EIGHT	15	16	12	16	22	14

### EAGLE KNIGHTS

Exceptional warriors, commanders of lesser orders, and the Emperor's own bodyguard. They wear cloaks of white eagle feathers. Air elementals have been bound into these cloaks, enabling the knights to flutter and glide short distances.

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6.

**Weapons:** Long Spear 120%, damage 1D10+1+1D6  
Broadsword 100%, damage 1D8+1+1D6  
Dagger 90%, damage 1D4+2+1D4

**Armor:** 1D8+3 (helm on), Melnibonéan Half Plate.

**Spells:** Hell's Armor (1-4), Hell's Razor (1-4), Suppleness of Xiombarg (1-4), Speed of Vezhan (1-3), Summon Elemental (1), Undo Magic (1-4), Wings of Lassa (4).

**Demons & Elementals:** Air elemental bound into cloak.

**Skills:** Common Tongue 75%, Dodge 90%, Insight 60%, Jump 90%, Listen 85%, Melnibonéan 100%, Search 100%, Track 90%, Witch Sight 50%.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
ONE	18	14	15	15	16	15
TWO	16	14	17	12	20	16
THREE	14	13	20	14	21	17
FOUR	20	15	13	13	24	14
FIVE	14	18	19	11	19	19
SIX	20	11	14	17	18	13
SEVEN	15	18	18	11	21	18
EIGHT	14	16	19	12	27	18

### IMPERIAL GUARD

These yellow-clad warriors are the principal force of Melniboné. They patrol the walls of the city, and guard against attack from petty jealous human nations. In ancient times they marched in vast legions across the world. Even today they occasionally

board the battle-barges once more to repel some feeble human assault.

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Battle-axe (RH) 80%, damage 1D8+2+1D4

Battle-axe (LH) 80%, damage 1D8+2+1D4

Shortsword 75%, damage 1D6+1+1D4

Dagger 70%, damage 1D4+2+1D4

**Armor:** 1D8+3 (helm on), Melnibonéan Half Plate.

**Spells:** Bonds Unbreakable (3), Demon's Eye (1), Heal (2), Hell's Armor (1-4), Hell's Razor (1-4), Horns of Hionhurn (1-3), Muddle (1), Sinew of Mabelode (1-3), Speed of Vezhan (1-3), Suppleness of Xiombarg (1-3), Ward (3).

**Skills:** Common Tongue 50%, Dodge 75%, Listen 70%, Melnibonéan 100%, Ride 60%, Sailing 75%, Search 70%, Track 50%, Witch Sight 30%.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
ONE	13	13	12	14	23	13
TWO	18	9	14	20	22	12
THREE	11	14	14	16	16	14
FOUR	13	11	13	9	21	12
FIVE	17	17	14	11	19	16
SIX	15	16	15	15	20	16
SEVEN	15	16	13	16	26	15
EIGHT	13	16	13	18	17	15

## IMRRYRIAN LANCERS

The Imrryrian Lancers are a famous cavalry regiment quartered in the city. They deal with the security of the island, striking faster and further than infantry. They are part of the Imperial Guard, and as such wear yellow cloaks and amber plumes. Their horses are caparisoned in gold and saffron.

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Lance 90%, damage 1D8+1+3D6

Small Shield 85%, damage KB+1D3+1D4, 20 hit points

Broadsword 80%, damage 1D8+1+1D4

**Armor:** 1D8+3 (helm on), Melnibonéan Half Plate.

**Spells:** Demon's Eye (1), Heal (2), Hell's Armor (1-4), Hell's Bulwark (1-4), Hell's Razor (1-4), Hell's Sharp Flame (1-4), Moonrise (1), Muddle (1), Sinew of Mabelode (1-3), Speed of Vezhan (1-3).

**Skills:** Common Tongue 50%, Dodge 60%, Jump 50%, Melnibonéan 100%, Natural World 40%, Ride 90%, Search 75%, Track 65%, Witch Sight 30%.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
ONE	17	18	11	9	23	15
TWO	18	14	13	15	26	14
THREE	12	9	18	13	26	14
FOUR	12	12	15	16	14	14
FIVE	16	19	15	15	25	17
SIX	14	10	18	13	22	14
SEVEN	16	11	18	10	18	14
EIGHT	15	17	13	11	23	15

## THE SILENT GUARD

Eunuch archers, taken from among the half-Melnibonéan elite slave population. Their tongues have been removed. They are the best archers on Melniboné, wielding the bone bow with deadly accuracy.

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Melnibonéan Bone Bow 100%, damage 2D6+1+1D2

Shortsword 65%, damage 1D6+1+1D4

Dagger 55%, damage 1D4+2+1D4

**Armor:** 1D6-1 (no helm), Leather.

**Spells:** Demon's Eye (1), Heal (2), Hell's Armor (1-4), Hell's Sharp Flame (1-4), Make Whole (3), Moonrise (1), Suppleness of Xiombarg (1-3).

**Skills:** Craft (Fletching) 70%, Dodge 70%, Move Quietly 80%, Search 100%, Understand Common Tongue 75%, Understand Melnibonéan 75%.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
ONE	12	17	13	20	16	15
TWO	15	15	14	19	13	15
THREE	17	20	8	20	18	14
FOUR	13	20	16	20	17	18
FIVE	14	19	12	20	19	16
SIX	13	20	13	16	14	17
SEVEN	11	15	15	17	15	15
EIGHT	17	20	12	18	18	16

## DRAGON PRINCES

**D**RAGON PRINCE IS the title conferred to those warrior-nobles of Melniboné who ride the dragons, an increasingly rare event in this day and age. He or she may spend years preparing and training, only to ride a dragon once or twice in a lifetime. Dragon Princes are the noblest of the noble, move in the upper echelons of Melnibonéan society, and are invariably rich and powerful beyond the dreams of most humans. Their numbers are greatly reduced of old.

## DRAGON PRINCES

Even without their steeds, the Dragon Princes are a military unit to be feared. They are the most skilled troops in Melniboné. They wear gleaming scale armor and dragon helms.

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Great Sword 130%, damage 2D8+1D4

Broadsword 120%, damage 1D8+1+1D4

Full Shield 120%, damage KB+1D4+1D4, 22 hit points

**Armor:** 1D10+6 (helm on), Melnibonéan Plate.

**Spells:** Bounty of Straasha (4), Brazier of Power (4), Chain of Being (4), Demon's Eye (1), Flames of Kakatal (4), Gift of Grome (4), Heal (2), Hell's Armor (1-4), Hell's Bulwark (1-4), Hell's Razor (1-4), Horns of Hionhurn (1-3), Midnight (1), Moonrise (1), Muddle (1), Refutation (1-4), Sinew of Mabelode (1-3), Soul of Chardros (1-3), Speed of Vezhan (1-3), Summon Demon (1), Summon Elemental (1), Suppleness of Xiombarg (1-3), Undo Magic (1-4), Visage of Arioch (1-3), Wings of Lassa (4), Wisdom of Stortar (1-3).



**Skills:** Art (Courtly Manners) 85%, Common Tongue 70%, Dodge 75%, Dragon Song 95%, Melnibonéan 125%, Million Spheres 10%, Navigate 80%, Ride Dragon 150%, Search 85%, Witch Sight 60%.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
ONE	15	11	12	14	24	12
TWO	15	16	17	13	29	17
THREE	14	10	12	15	25	11
FOUR	16	13	16	14	31	15
FIVE	17	12	14	16	26	13
SIX	17	13	15	17	24	14
SEVEN	17	15	14	17	25	15
EIGHT	16	13	15	18	30	14

## DRAGON PRINCE AND RETINUE

This haughty Melnibonéan lord, clad in the shimmering scaled armor of his station, glides through the streets of Imrryr accompanied by his slaves. One shields him from the sun with a silken parasol, another endlessly recites his praises, more walk behind holding up his long cloak so that it does not drag on the ground. A trusted elite child slave carries his ornamental goad, should he have need of it. All are garbed in rich clothes of peach, carnelian, port red and aquamarine. Adventurers who linger in the Dragon Lord's vicinity are told to move on, as their drab appearance offends his aesthetic sensibilities.

STR 14 CON 15 SIZ 17 INT 22 POW 25  
DEX 17 APP 23 HP 16

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** Great Sword 112%, damage 2D8+1D4  
Goad 104%, damage 1D4+1D4

**Armor:** 1D10+6 (helm on), Melnibonéan Plate

**Spells:** Bonds Unbreakable (3), Bounty of Straasha (4), Demon's Ear (1), Demon's Eye (1), Flames of Kakatal (4), Gift of Grome (4), Heal (2), Hell's Armor (1-4), Hell's Razor (1-4), Horns of Hionhurn (1-3), Midnight (1), Moonrise (1), Muddle (1), Plasticity of Balo (1-3), Refutation (1-4), Sinew of Mabelode (1-3), Soul of Chardros (1-3), Speed of Vezhan (1-3), Summon Elemental (1), Suppleness of Xiombarg (1-3), Undo Magic (1-4), Visage of Arioch (1-3), Ward (3), Wings of Lassa (4), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3).

**Skills:** Common Tongue 55%, Dodge 63%, Dragon Song 91%, Melnibonéan 100%, Million Spheres 11%, Navigate 82%, Ride Dragon 144%, Search 82%, Witch Sight 58%.

## BROODING DRAGON PRINCESS

This statuesque Dragon Princess has long, silver-streaked raven hair falling across her red-lacquered armor. She is accompanied by a slave who nurses an ivory casket filled with glowing coals. Nestled amongst the embers is an opalescent egg, the size of a person's head. It is a dragon egg, and soon to hatch. The princess spends all of her time attending to it, never allowing it to leave her sight. Powerful drugs keep her awake, and her indigo eyes burn with tension. If the egg hatches, she will be ecstatic. Should some misfortune befall either egg or dragonet, she will first fly into a terrible rage, then a dolorous and suicidal melancholy.

STR 16 CON 13 SIZ 17 INT 25 POW 24  
DEX 13 APP 21 HP 15

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6

**Weapons:** Great Sword 137%, damage 2D8+1D6  
Dagger 73%, damage 1D4+2+1D6

**Armor:** 1D10+6 (helm on), Melnibonéan Plate.

**Spells:** Breath of Life (1), Demon's Eye (1), Heal (2), Hell's Armor (1-4), Hell's Razor (1-4), Horns of Hionhurn (1-3), Make Fast (1), Make Whole (3), Midnight (1), Moonrise (1), Plasticity of Balo (1-3), Refutation (1-4), Sinew of Mabelode (1-3), Soul of Chardros (1-3), Speed of Vezhan (1-3), Suppleness of Xiombarg

(1-3), Undo Magic (1-4), Visage of Arioch (1-3), Ward (3), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3).

**Skills:** Common Tongue 60%, Dodge 79%, Dragon Song 96%, High Speech 40%, Listen 68%, Melnibonéan 125%, Million Spheres 18%, Natural Word 79%, Navigate 88%, Potions 110%, Ride Dragon 132%, Search 92%, Witch Sight 67%.

## DRAGONS

THESE VAST, SCALED reptiles slumber in caverns beneath Imrryr, periodically awakening to fly forth and spread fear and destruction at their masters' bidding.

### MELNIBONÉAN DRAGONS

Here are a flight of dragons, majestic and terrible. Use them in conjunction with the eight Dragon Princes given above, on those rare occasions when the dragons wake.

**Damage Bonus:** +3D8

**Weapons:** Bite 25%, damage 7D8  
Combustible Venom 70%, damage 1D6+4 per round to each target within an area of CON yards.  
Tail Swipe 20%, damage 1D8+7D8

**Armor:** 2D8+8, dragon scales.

**Skills:** Remember 75%, Search 80%.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
ONE	64	76	67	14	15	72
TWO	70	89	65	9	21	77
THREE	68	71	60	12	19	66
FOUR	66	60	66	14	16	63
FIVE	63	81	69	10	15	75
SIX	65	54	60	13	17	57
SEVEN	62	64	60	11	14	62
EIGHT	67	74	64	12	18	69

## NOBLES

EVERY FULL-BLOODED Melnibonéan is a noble. Most prefer the drug-enhanced solitude of their towers to the streets, but some travel about for various reasons. Nobles might be accompanied by a full retinue, or ride past on a sedan chair or demonic steed, or might be alone, wrapped in contemplation or drugged frenzy.

### BATTLE-BARGE COMMANDER

This grave-faced woman is tall and imperious. She wears no make-up, and disdains diaphanous cloth in favor of armor fashioned from sea shells. Her hair is cut short to fit under a conch-shell helmet, and her cloak is deep blue. She talks of nothing save the waves and the ocean. Her attendant slaves are all hand-picked from sailors imprisoned in Monshanjik Tower.

STR 15 CON 14 SIZ 18 INT 23 POW 21  
DEX 14 APP 19 HP 16

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6.

**Weapons:** Broadsword 149%, damage 1D8+1+1D6  
Large Shield 136%, damage KB, 26 hit points  
Dagger 108%, damage 1D4+2+1D4

**Armor:** 1D8+2D10 (helm on), Lacquered Sea-shell demon armor.

**Spells:** Bounty of Straasha (4), Brazier of Power (4), Breath of Life (1), Chain of Being (4), Demon's Eye (1), Heal (2), Summon Elemental (1).

**Bound Demons & Elementals:** Air elemental bound into helmet, provides air in the event of falling overboard.

Lesser demon bound into ancient suit of sea-shell armor.



**Skills:** Common Tongue 70%, Dodge 76%, Melnibonéan 115%, Natural World 65%, Navigate 138%, Oratory 117%, Sailing 110%, Scribe 91%, Swim 82%, Unknown Kingdoms 18%, Witch Sight 71%, Young Kingdoms 66%.

**SHHH'AHHHH, lesser demon, bound into armor.**

STR 15 CON 23 SIZ 18 INT 6 POW 20  
DEX 4 MOV 0 HP 21

**Abilities:** *Demon Armor*, adds 2D10

**Need:** To never be more than one mile from the sea.

**Magic Points Cost to Summon:** 20.

## COLD-EYED NOBLEMAN

This noble is obsessed by the purity of the Melnibonéan bloodline, and stops and questions others of his race about their relatives and ancestors. His slaves carry long rolls of paper with meticulous family trees and precise annotations, as well as ink and quills. He ignores humans. Should he be directly affronted, such as by a human laying a hand on his shoulder, or even by being spoken to rudely, he is so overcome with shock that he swoons to the ground. Once recovered, he cries weakly for the brute's execution. He wears a full-sleeved gown of opalescent silk, which shimmers with a thousand rainbow hues. His waist-length hair is combed and scented.

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 15 INT 27 POW 21  
DEX 13 APP 19 HP 15

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** none.

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** Midnight (1), Moonrise (1), Refutation (1-4), Undo Magic (1-4), Visage of Arioch (1-3), Ward (3), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3).

**Skills:** Art (Courtly Manners) 113%, Melnibonéan 135%, Oratory 77%, Scent/Taste 51%, Scribe 99%, Witch Sight 30%.

## HALLUCINATING NOBLEWOMAN

Inspired by the drugs which burn feverishly bright in her hazel-brown eyes, this woman drifts ethereally along Imrry's twisted streets. She speaks with people who are not there, tries to walk through walls, and croons and giggles over the rainbow colors in a fountain's spray. Her patient slaves guide her away from situations where their mistress might hurt herself, but allow her otherwise to walk where she will. This noblewoman dresses in an off-the-shoulder sleeveless shift of lace and transparent silk. Her make-up is smeared, her blue-black hair tangled and caught with leaves, and her feet are bare and bruised.

STR 11 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 20 POW 25  
DEX 12 APP 17 HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** none.

**Weapons:** none.

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** Bounty of Straasha (4), Flames of Kakatal (4), Gift of Grome (4), Midnight (1), Moonrise (1), Summon Plant Lord (5), Summon Elemental (1), Wings of Lassa (4).

**Skills:** Climb 40%, Jump 42%, Melnibonéan 100%, Potions 94%, Skip 60%, Swim 25%, Witch Sight 30%.

## BRIGHTLY-CLAD NOBLE

This smirking, enigmatic nobleman wears a patchwork cloak of butterfly wings sewn together with spider silk. He is interested in things alchemical. He is recruiting nimble-fingered slaves to pluck the stings from wasps and bees, and intends to distill the venom to make a powerful new drug.

STR 14 CON 12 SIZ 15 INT 26 POW 25  
DEX 14 APP 18 HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Poisoned Rapier 71%, damage 1D6+1+1D4 +POT 20 poison

**Armor:** 1D6-1 (no helm), Brightly Quilted Leather.

**Spells:** Flames of Kakatal (4), Summon Elemental (1), Suppleness of Xiombarg (1-3), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3).

**Skills:** Hide 74%, Natural World 59%, Potions 101%, Search 78%, Trap 77%, Witch Sight 47%.

## NOBLE CHILDREN

A small group of lazily sadistic Melnibonéan children, their bright young eyes sparkling with happy malice, accompanied by their concerned slaves. All are breathtakingly dressed in a broad spectrum of colors, some indistinguishable to the human eye. Should the children encounter any creature or race they are unfamiliar with, they demand to know how it works and everything about it, complete with a vivisection lesson to further their understanding. They draw sharp, silver-bladed scalpels and daggers, eager to begin. Their games are many, their attention spans short, their motivations inhuman and hedonistic.

**Damage Bonus:** -1D4

**Weapons:** Knife 40%, damage 1D4+2-1D4

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** none.

**Skills:** Dodge 60%, Hide 70%, Melnibonéan 50%, Natural World 10%.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
ONE	7	8	9	18	23	9
TWO	8	10	7	15	24	9
THREE	9	9	7	15	23	8
FOUR	6	6	5	17	22	6
FIVE	6	10	10	14	24	10
SIX	8	10	7	12	24	9
SEVEN	7	5	9	13	16	7
EIGHT	7	11	7	18	29	9

## SORCERERS

ALTHOUGH NOT ALL Melnibonéans are sorcerers, those who are display a familiarity with the arcane that comes only through birthright. Wielders of great magic, with all manner of powers at their beck and call, Melnibonéan sorcerers made the Bright Empire a force to be feared, and one to last ten thousand years. Encounters with such supernatural practitioners are always fraught with peril.



## HURRIED SORCERER

This thin, gawky man rubs his hands constantly, cracking his knuckles when excited. His long, reddish-brown hair floats around his slender face, and he has grey eyes. He is a devotee of Nnuurrrr's c, Lord of Insects, and resembles an insect in his nervous, twitching gestures. Clad at all time in a long, russet gown which drags on the ground behind him, small fragments of the cloth constantly tear away, becoming insects which creep or fly away into the world.

STR 11 CON 8 SIZ 17 INT 25 POW 28  
DEX 10 APP 13 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** none.

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** Bounty of Straasha (4), Brazier of Power (4), Chain of Being (4), Chaos Warp (4), Curse of Chaos (4), Flames of Kakatal (4), Gift of Grome (4), Make Fast (1), Make Whole (3), Midnight (1), Moonrise (1), Muddle (1), Pox (1), Refutation (1-4), Soul of Chardros (1-3), Speed of Vezhan (1-3), Summon Demon (1), Summon Elemental (1), Undo Magic (1-4), Ward (3), Wings of Lassa (4), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3).

**Demons & Elementals:** Lesser demon bound into cloak.

**Skills:** Common Tongue 45%, Fast Talk 58%, High Speech 19%, Melnibonéan 125%, Million Spheres 17%, Natural World 120%, Scribe 77%.

**Z'CCCCC'K, lesser insect demon, bound into cloak.**

STR 6 CON 15 SIZ 17 INT 7 POW 16  
DEX 27 MOV 0 HP 16

**Abilities:** Locusts, damage 1D8 from insect bites.

**Need:** To strip one corpse of flesh per day.

**Magic Points Cost to Summon:** 23.

## MYSTERIOUS SORCERESS

This exceptionally tall and gaunt woman is dressed in shadows which pool around her feet and lap with cold velvet tongues at the feet of passers-by. Her interest is in emotional suffering, and she lingers with any who can tell tales of broken hearts and doomed lives. She is attended by demons of lassitude, melancholy and despair, and she spreads exhaustion, depression, and unutterable woe. Her hair is long and black, her eyes dark, her soft skin the color of milk.

STR 12 CON 10 SIZ 20 INT 30 POW 28  
DEX 11 APP 19 HP 15

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** none.

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** Bonds Unbreakable (3), Brazier of Power (4), Chain of Being (4), Demon's Ear (1), Midnight (1), Muddle (1), Refutation (1-4), Soul of Chardros (1-3), Summon Demon (1), Undo Magic (1-4), Visage of Arioeh (1-3), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3).

**Demons & Elementals:** several lesser demons of woe are in attendance.

**Enchantments:** Cloak of Shadows, a garment of shifting blackness, conferring Hide 500%.

**Skills:** Art (Tragedy) 157%, Common Tongue 90%, Disguise 79%, Hide 500%, High Speech 47%, Melnibonéan 150%, Move Quietly 88%, Oratory 164%, Scribe 111%.

**VERLAINES, lesser demons of woe and misery, sniffing shadowy humanoid figures with brimming eyes and trembling voices.**

STR 7 CON 6 SIZ 5 INT 21 POW 15  
DEX 8 MOV shuffle-4 HP 6

**Abilities:** Knowledge (Doomed Loves), accuracy 63%.

**Cause Misery,** resist demon's POW with INT or be cast into inconsolable melancholy for one hour.

**Need:** To reduce one person to despair each day.

**Magic Points Cost to Summon:** 22.

## SINUOUS SORCERER

This slender young Melnibonéan has a great mane of brown-black hair that reaches to his waist. He dresses in a loose-sleeved shirt of copper-colored satin, a wine-red velvet doublet encrusted with gold and pearls, and ultramarine hose. He has a sibilant, sensuous voice, and deep blue eyes. His hair is ensorcelled, swirling and writhing with a life of its own. When the sorcerer is asleep his hair is his bodyguard, and has more than once throttled a would-be assassin in the night. By day his hair is playful and curious, often entwining itself around interesting objects or people.

STR 13 CON 11 SIZ 14 INT 25 POW 27  
DEX 15 APP 23 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Strangle with Hair 75%, damage as per spot rule for drowning.

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** Brazier of Power (4), Chain of Being (4), Demon's Ear (1), Midnight (1), Moonrise (1), Muddle (1), Plasticity of Balo (1-3), Refutation (1-4), Sinew of Mabelode (1-3), Speed of Vezhan (1-3), Summon Demon (1), Summon Elemental (1), Suppleness of Xiombarg (1-3), Undo Magic (1-4), Visage of Arioeh (1-3), Wings of Lassa (4).

**Skills:** Art (Dance) 92%, Art (Seduction) 118%, Common Tongue 95%, Craft (Sleight of Hair) 75%, Melnibonéan 125%, Move Quietly 71%, Oratory 96%, Potions 66%, Witch Sight 45%.

## AQUATIC SORCERESS

This sorceress dresses in flowing silks of blue and green. Her speech is languid, and liquid. She travels in a crystal egg carried upon water elemental, which washes about the streets of Imrryr. Her tower stands in a lake, bounded by a wall of ice, but a stone's throw from the Courtyard of Hands. Only the roof of the tower stands above the lake's surface, with a single door inset. It is dry inside, and one can stare out the windows to see eels and fat perch and otters playing amongst the weeds and rushes.

STR 12 CON 11 SIZ 14 INT 29 POW 28  
DEX 17 APP 18 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Weapons:** none.

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** Bounty of Straasha (4), Brazier of Power (4), Breath of Life (1), Chain of Being (4), Make Fast (1), Make Whole (3), Moonrise (1), Muddle (1), Plasticity of Balo (1-3), Refutation (1-4), Soul of Chardros (1-3), Speed of Vezhan (1-3), Summon Elemental (1), Suppleness of Xiombarg (1-3), Undo Magic (1-4), Visage of Arioeh (1-3), Ward (3), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3).

**Bound Demons & Elementals:** water elemental bound beneath crystal egg.

**Skills:** Melnibonéan 145%, Million Spheres 13%, Natural World 86%, Navigate 54%, Sailing 79%, Swim 87%, Witch Sight 52%.

## DREAMERS

HERE IS A CROSS-SECTION of the folk of the Dreaming City, six individuals who work at realizing dreams, or are simply lost in them. Each might involve the adventurers in their schemes and visions.

### AGING PRIEST

This elderly Melnibonéan is stooped and thin, his skin translucent, his long silver hair falling about him in disarray. He wears the robes of a Priest of Chaos, and goes about muttering to himself. He seeks slaves to assist him in lighting the tapers and singing dark hymns. Those who accompany him find that the candles are mere wax stumps, the temple roof is open in places, and the nesting birds are more likely to enjoy the hymns than the absent and indifferent Dukes of Disorder.

STR 8 CON 7 SIZ 14 INT 13 POW 32  
DEX 6 APP 17 HP 11

**Damage Bonus:** none.

**Weapons:** Obsidian Dagger 30%, damage 1D4+2.

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** long forgotten. A Fast Talk might persuade the priest to recall one, but a Heal spell is just as likely to come out as Hell's Sharp Flame.

**Skills:** Art (Worship) 71%, Melnibonéan 65%, Million Spheres 24%, Muttered Chaos Catechisms 13%.

## ABSORBED SCHOLAR

This driven academic is usually half-dressed in a motley of clothing, and pursued by slaves clutching the rest of his garments. He never stands still long enough for them to properly attend his grooming, for he is always dashing off to consult some volume or conduct some experiment. His eyes burn intensely, but whether from madness or inspiration is hard to judge.

STR 14 CON 12 SIZ 15 INT 30 POW 19  
DEX 11 APP 16 HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Silver Quill 22%, damage 1D2

**Armor:** 1D2 from some random piece about his person, a plate-mail greave or a pot helm perhaps.

**Spells:** Bounty of Straasha (4), Flames of Kakatal (4), Gift of Grome (4), Summon Elemental (1), Wings of Lassa (4), Wisdom of Stortar (1-3).

**Demons & Elementals:** A patient earth elemental shambles after him, carrying instruments and bookshelves.

**Skills:** Common Tongue 75%, High Speech 31%, Melnibonéan 150%, Million Spheres 20%, Natural World 72%, Physik 87%, Potions 71%, Scribe 86%, Unknown Kingdoms 11%, Witch Sight 42%, Young Kingdoms 64%.

## SCHEMING PLOTTER

This handsome noble is dressed in orange velvet, with ruffles and lace. He strolls the streets of Imrryr like a dandy, and always takes the time to greet strangers. He is a friendly face in this self-obsessed city. However, his mind is turning over how best he can use these new acquaintances to his advantage. Would they bring him kudos if he introduced them to the court? Could he use them to plague his enemies with their human boorishness? No opportunity or possibility escapes him. He is always seen with a stylish companion.

STR 12 CON 11 SIZ 14 INT 23 POW 22  
DEX 13 APP 20 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Jewelled Broadsword 61%, damage 1D8+1+1D4

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** Demon's Ear (1), Midnight (1), Muddle (1), Pox (1), Visage of Arioeh (1-3).

**Skills:** Art (Courtly Manners) 99%, Common Tongue 90%, Conceal Object 78%, Insight 72%, Listen 80%, Melnibonéan 115%, Oratory 102%, Witch Sight 44%.

## VISIONARY ARTIST

This wide-eyed Melnibonéan woman is dressed in a paint-spattered smock, and her hair is tied up and tucked under a loose hat. She is followed by a score of slaves, including carpenters, tailors, hairdressers, painters, and other craftspeople. She beholds Imrryr, her finest creation. She is the city's artist, its sculptor. She walks inside her greatest work, making final adjustments before presenting her work to the emperor. That building needs some lattice, this wolfhound must be blue, that adventurer's nose simply will not do. Could this be true, is she mad, or is it merely a beautiful dream wafting from the fragrant pipe she smokes? Whatever the case, her slaves work hard to follow the great artist's instructions.

STR 15 CON 12 SIZ 17 INT 26 POW 21  
DEX 18 APP 17 HP 15

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** none.

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** Bounty of Straasha (4), Demon's Eye (1), Flames of Kakatal (4), Gift of Grome (4), Make Fast (1), Make Whole (3), Moonrise (1), Summon Elemental (1), Wings of Lassa (4).

**Skills:** Art (Painting) 194%, Art (Sculpture) 133%, Common Tongue 65%, Melnibonéan 130%, Search 90%, Witch Sight 73%.

## DREAMING VOYAGER

This Melnibonéan woman could at first be mistaken for a corpse. Her skin is as white as marble, and her eyes are dark pits. But she breathes, slow and deep, and her body blooms with the last stage of pregnancy. She does not go out, but reposes on silken cushions, dressed in layers of black taffeta. Without leaving her tower, she has voyaged on wings of hallucinogens to countless spheres and realms. She has, she says, seen both the beginning and the end of the Bright Empire, flown across the world as a dragon, and taken Arioeh as a lover. All of these things are true, to her at least. What of the child she bears?

STR 5 CON 15 SIZ 17 INT 26 POW 24  
DEX 7 APP 19 HP 16

**Damage Bonus:** none.

**Weapons:** none.

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** her mind is too addled to recall them.

**Skills:** Common Tongue 70%, Melnibonéan 120%, Million Spheres 96%, Potions 238%, Unknown Languages 85%, Witch Sight 120%.

## XENOPHOBIC DUELIST

This Melnibonéan is clad in squares of red and green leather, held together with small silver chains. He despises humans, abhors them, and will not brook their presence on the same street as him. His slaves all wear hoods, to hide their repugnant non-Melnibonéan features. Given the choice, he would expunge the race. Adventurers had best stay out of his way, for his temper is short, and he is not unskilled at combat and other forms of murder.

STR 17 CON 14 SIZ 13 INT 20 POW 23  
DEX 15 APP 16 HP 14

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Rapier 126%, damage 1D6+1+1D4

Dagger 94%, damage 1D4+2+1D4

**Armor:** 1D6-1 (no helm), Leather.

**Spells:** Hell's Armor (1-4), Hell's Razor (1-4), Hell's Sharp Flame (1-4), Horns of Hionhurn (1-3), Sinew of Mabelode (1-3), Speed of Vezhan (1-3), Suppleness of Xiombarg (1-3).

**Skills:** Dodge 76%, Oratory 64%, Melnibonéan 100%.

## SLAVES

ALL MELNIBONÉANS keep slaves. If judged by the standards by which humans treat their own kind, then it is far better to be enslaved in Imrryr than any other city in the Young Kingdoms. For the most part slaves on the Dragon Isle are well fed and well clothed, and kept drugged and content.

## MUTANT SLAVE

This hybrid human slave has eyes extended from their sockets on slowly flexing stalks, courtesy of his master's arcane skills. He can look forwards and over his shoulder at the same time, thus making a useful bodyguard.



STR 17 CON 16 SIZ 16 INT 11 POW 10  
DEX 13 APP 3 HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D6.

Weapons: Brawl 82%, damage 1D3+1D6  
Wrestle 71%, damage special

Armor: 1D6-1 (no helm), Leather.

Skills: Common Tongue 55%, Dodge 56%, Jump 48%, Search 99%, Throw 60%, Track 91%.

## BODY SLAVE

This mute slave walks before his mistress everywhere she goes, scattering rose petals in the air before her path and scenting the air she breathes with their delicate perfume. His long auburn hair is oiled, and tied back in a waist-length plait, and he wears intricately embroidered velvet robes.

STR 11 CON 10 SIZ 13 INT 12 POW 14  
DEX 13 APP 18 HP 12

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: none.

Armor: none.

Enchantments: The rose petals which he throws about him come from an endless source, the small leather pouch upon his hip. It opens onto an other-dimensional space containing a garden of hypnotically-singing roses, their petals of crimson, emerald and gold.

Skills: Art (Strike Pleasing Pose) 65%, Scent/Taste 78%, Understand Common Tongue 60%.

## HALF-MELNIBONÉAN SLAVE

Although partially of human blood, this slave passes for a Melnibonéan under all but the closest scrutiny. She is one of the elite slaves upon the Isle, and is a trusted emissary of her master. She delivers messages on his behalf, massages his feet, writes his letters and invitations, and speaks for him should he wish not to lower himself to such a common task. Tall, slender and proud, she is clad in whispering silk, her hair unbound, with intricate designs painted upon her cheeks and eyelids.

STR 10 CON 9 SIZ 14 INT 14 POW 12  
DEX 12 APP 16 HP 12

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: none.

Armor: none.

Skills: Common Tongue 70%, Craft (Massage) 83%, Melnibonéan 70%, Oratory 44%, Physik 62%, Scribe 70%.

## LABORING SLAVE

Brutal and bestial, this slave is kept in a mindless state by powerful drugs. He cannot speak, but only grunt, drooling uncontrollably all the while. His callused, muscular body is clad in filthy rags. His hair is caked with dirt, his eyes are unfocused. This slave obeys any order quite literally. Denied of the drugs which sustain him, he would erupt in a murderous rage, before dying in twitching agony a few hours later.

STR 22 (11) CON 24 (12) SIZ 13 INT 5 (10) POW 11  
DEX 6 (12) APP 7 HP 23 (12)

Numbers in parentheses represent the slave in his undrugged state.

Damage Bonus: +2D6 (none).

Weapons: Brawl 50%, damage 1D3+2D6 (1D3+0)

Armor: none.

Skills: Dodge 12%, Drool & Grunt 25%, Follow Instructions 100%, Understand Common Tongue 25%.

## HOUSEHOLD SLAVES

Every tower in Imrryr is cleaned and maintained by slaves. These men and women traipse about in a dazed state, looking to the well-being of their masters. They do not contemplate revolt, or anything else for that matter. They are dressed in the fashion of

the tower. Tastes range from neat formal livery to outlandish costumes and dyed hair.

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: none.

Armor: none.

Spells: none.

Skills: Craft (Domestic Duties) 60%.

	STR	CON	SIZ	DEX	POW	HP
ONE	11	10	13	9	8	12
TWO	13	9	10	11	10	10
THREE	12	10	12	8	9	11
FOUR	11	13	10	10	7	12
FIVE	10	9	7	11	12	8
SIX	8	11	13	8	6	12
SEVEN	9	11	10	10	11	11
EIGHT	10	8	11	10	5	10

## DEMONS

**F**EW MELNIBONÉANS TODAY have the energy to summon and bind new demons. Most of those demon artifacts found upon the Dragon Isle are antique, their binding sigils fraying, the demons often cantankerous, troublesome, or weakened by the passing of time. Demons are most usually summoned and requested to do a single task before being released. Those demons found bound are often startling and unique, chosen as much for their appearance, beautiful or terrifying, as for their powers.

### ABANDONED DEMON

This demon was the lover of a Melnibonéan lordling long dead, and has languished for centuries, forgotten, bound into a pearl-handled mirror. It is supposed to reflect the face of the beholder's true love, so that one may recognize he, she or it upon first meeting. Now it only ever shows the tawny-eyed and mournful face of the late, lamented Prince Phyllos Mykrates. Sacrificing an innocent to the demon in the mirror causes it to manifest, allegedly for a night of rapturous love, but of late it makes a depressing and lackluster companion.

STR 14 CON 13 SIZ 16 INT 10 POW 20  
DEX 16 APP 36 MOV sashay-8 HP 15

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Abilities: *Soul Sight*, range 100 yards.

Skills: Lovemaking 100%, Reflect True Love 100%, Weep and Sigh 100%.

Need: To be wrapped in silk when not in use.

Magic Points Cost to Summon: 40.

### ANGRY DEMON

This spined, cat-like demon manifests once per day on command, wreathed in an aura of green flames. It is bound into an ornate tiara of silver, set with diamonds and black pearls. The demon communicates with the tiara's wearer in telepathic yowls and hisses. It was originally bound for 100 years, and has been trapped for five times that number. Once manifested its binding is void, and caterwauling and clawing the demon attacks once and departs, unless immediately rebound.

STR 23 CON 17 SIZ 20 INT 7 POW 16  
DEX 27 MOV lope-14 HP 19

Abilities: *Demon Armor*, 1D8 flaming green fur.

Bite, at 80% damage 1D10+1D6

Claw, at 50% damage 1D8+2+2D8

Skills: Dodge 54%, Pounce 70%.

Need: To be released.

Magic Points Cost to Summon: 38.

## BORED DEMON

This diminutive, warty humanoid is a game player. It has long arms and clever fingers, blinking orange eyes and a gap-toothed grin. It knows every game of skill and tactics in the Million Spheres, or so it claims, but is suffering from dreadful boredom due to the lack of worthy opponents. A truly brilliant adversary (INT 21 or more) engages its interest, proving it an intelligent and competitive player and conversationalist.

STR 10 CON 14 SIZ 8 INT 21 POW 16  
DEX 19 MOV hop-10 HP 11

**Abilities:** Manipulate, at 30%.

**Play Game,** match INT:INT to determine winner.

**Skills:** Art (Conversation) 90%.

**Need:** To play chess daily against an intelligent opponent.

**Magic Points Cost to Summon:** 28.

## BEASTS

**F**EW LARGE PREDATORS survive on the Dragon Isle. Here are three that may prove a threat and a challenge to adventurers.

### WILD BOAR

This tusked brute hunts deep in the glades of the Isolated Fells. He is as broad as a horse, and heavier than a bull. Those who hunt him may soon have cause to regret it. He does not fall down until dead, ignoring major wounds or unconsciousness.

STR 24 CON 20 SIZ 33 INT 6 POW 15  
DEX 11 MOV trot-10 HP 27

**Damage Bonus:** +3D6

**Weapons:** Gore 50%, damage 2D6+3D6  
Trample 75%, damage 6D6 to downed foe

**Armor:** 1D4+1, bristled skin

**Skills:** Scent 80%.

### ANCIENT CROCODILE

This sly old reptile suns himself in the southern marshes. He has had occasion to sample human and Melnibonéan flesh, and rather likes it. When such delicacies draw near, he eases into the water and becomes a floating log.

STR 36 CON 26 SIZ 36 INT 9 POW 16  
DEX 8 MOV swim-6 HP 31

**Damage Bonus:** +3D6

**Weapons:** Bite 50%, damage 1D10+3D6

**Armor:** 1D3+2, scaly hide

**Skills:** Hide 80%, Move Quietly 35%, Scent/Taste 60%.

### LESSER MAMMOTH

This hairy mastodon is shy and docile. She dwells in the forests of Wa'aiya'oro. She has no fear of men, because she has never seen one. If they hurt her, her baffled rage will be murderous.

STR 40 CON 14 SIZ 44 INT 5 POW 9  
DEX 8 MOV run-10 HP 29

**Damage Bonus:** +4D6

**Weapons:** Trunk 50%, constrict for 4D6 damage  
Trample 50%, damage 8D6

**Armor:** 1D6+4, hide and hair

**Skills:** Search 25%, Scent 50%.

## WYRMS

**S**EA SERPENTS ARE FEARED by sailors across the Young Kingdoms, and they swim in great shoals in the waters of Wurm Cove. Ships which venture there during



the mating season are never heard of again. At other times of the year the serpents are encountered singly or in pairs.

### MALE SEA SERPENT

This old male could wrap himself around a human ship, and has done so on many occasions. He lost one eye to a harpoon a decade ago, and still bears that hatred towards the beings that float above the water. His heavy scales are deep-green, turning black with age.

STR 74 CON 84 SIZ 102 INT 13 POW 15  
DEX 11 MOV swim-10 HP 93

**Damage Bonus:** +10D6.

**Weapons:** Bite 60%, damage 5D6  
Coil and Crush 70%, damage 20D6  
Tail 40%, damage 1D10+10D6

**Armor:** 2D4+4, heavy scales.

**Skills:** Sense Ship 60%, Swim 100%.

### FEMALE SEA SERPENT

This graceful female delights in the water, arcing and leaping in a brilliant flash of blue light. She has beautiful jewelled scales. She does not hunt shipping, preferring fish and other less dangerous prey.

STR 53 CON 63 SIZ 81 INT 14 POW 13  
DEX 16 MOV swim-10 HP 72

**Damage Bonus:** +7D6.

**Weapons:** Bite 50%, damage 7D6  
Tail 30%, damage 1D10+7D6

**Armor:** 2D4, jewelled scales.

**Skills:** Leap 80%, Swim 100%.

### YOUNG SEA SERPENT

This pale hatchling is mottled yellow. She is no threat to shipping, but would make short work of a swimmer. If hungry, she might even tackle a raft. Any severe wound drives her back to the deep, where the sharks will fall upon her.

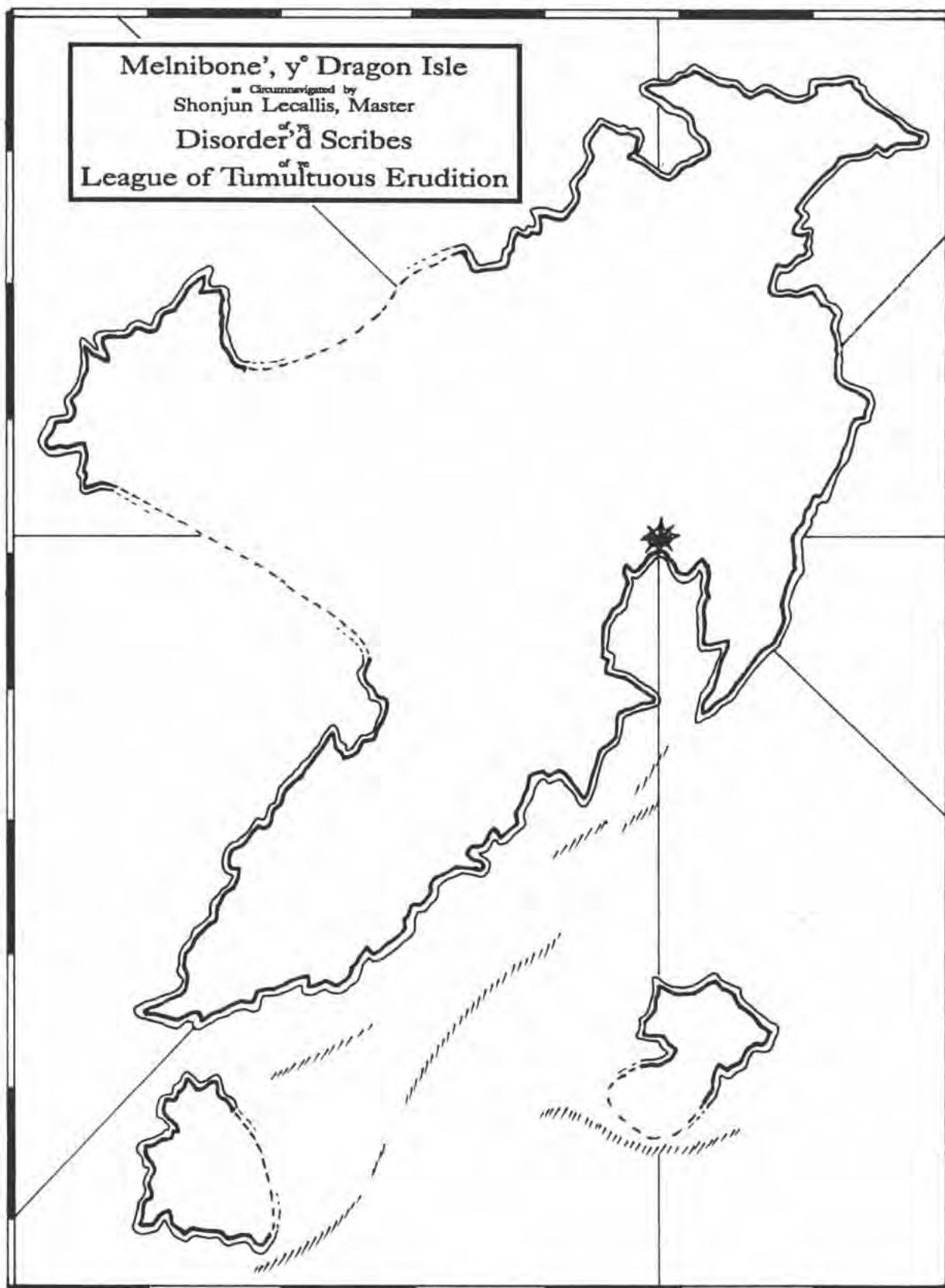
STR 26 CON 25 SIZ 31 INT 7 POW 11  
DEX 14 MOV swim-12 HP 23

**Damage Bonus:** +3D6

**Weapons:** Bite 40%, damage 3D6

**Armor:** 1D4, soft scales

**Skills:** Sense Weak Prey 40%, Swim 100%. ☼



PLAYER'S MAP OF MELNIBONÉ.



# THE SOJOURNER'S GUIDE TO MELNIBONÉ

**T**HE DISORDERED SCRIBES of the League of Tumultuous Erudition are a Chaos organization of scholars. Their goal is to record the experience of traversing the entire Young Kingdoms, nation by nation. They are deep in competition with their Lawful counterparts, the Iron Sages of the Order of the Brass Quill.

Sinbos H'nd'n is the Disordered Scribe who volunteered to tour Melniboné and keep a journal of his discoveries. Alas, H'nd'n has not returned, and it may take more than mere academics to rescue him. The league needs bold adventurers to follow H'nd'n's route and seek him out. Such an expedition would also be the perfect opportunity to test a new breed of demon which the league hopes to employ as a hardier alternative to wandering scribes.

## THE VESSEL OF VOLUMES

**T**HE LEAGUE OF Tumultuous Erudition has a floating headquarters, the scribe-ship *Wandering Wisdom*. The craft may be encountered on the ocean, or in any port in the Young Kingdoms. If at sea, the *Wandering Wisdom* simply hails the adventurers' ship, asking if bold souls are willing to undertake a journey of great importance. If the craft is docked, the scribes send out leaflets and messengers to say that hardy and inquisitive adventurers are sought for a profitable mission.

In some way, then, the adventurers are invited to come aboard the *Wandering Wisdom* for an interview with the head of the league.

The Captain of the vessel is Grodonion M'Glak, a Jharkorian scholar. He wears voluminous robes with sleeves to match, hanging down over his hands as though the garment belonged to a much larger man. He stands seven feet tall, but only five feet two of this is actually him. The rest is a varnished scalp-lock which stands straight up from his head. It serves him as a spike file, and scraps of foolscap paper are

impaled all along its length. M'Glak frequently tears off a random piece, consults it, then eats it.

M'Glak warmly greets the visitors. He is the soul of politeness and companionship. He thrusts back the sleeves of his robe and holds his arms wide, grinning all the while. "Welcome aboard the *Wandering Wisdom*! May the Dukes of Disorder bless thee with fancy, curiosity, and energy. May you never know all there is to learn, for in that there lies staleness, bleakness, and doom. Yet, may you forever seek that very goal, always to be tantalizingly denied." At this he breaks off and shakes the hands of the adventurers. "A ritual greeting, you understand. Would you follow me? Our league-master would have words with you."

## THE LEAGUE OF TUMULTUOUS ERUDITION

**T**HE DISORDERED SCRIBES of the League of Tumultuous Erudition are an organization of scholars aligned with Chaos. Their principle project is a series of volumes detailing each of the Young Kingdoms, with the general title of the *Sojourner's Guides*.

The scribes seek more than harvesting knowledge of the lands and cultures of the Young Kingdoms. By distributing such knowledge, they hope to encourage a Chaotic mixing of cultures and mores, with the result that people borrow ideas from cultures they had hitherto known little about. Eventually the Young Kingdoms will blend together to form an amazing new whole. Whether this greater vision is fulfilled, the individual books will be excellent travelers' companions.





GASNER 93

## GRODONION M'GLAK,

CAPTAIN OF THE WANDERING WISDOM

Chaos 87, Balance 65, Law 63

STR 12 CON 14 SIZ 10 INT 18 POW 16

DEX 15 APP 11 HP 12

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapon: Varnished head spike 54%, damage 1D4

Armor: Leather (1D6-1).

Spells: Make Fast (1), Make Whole (3), Summon Elemental (1), Wings of Lassa (4), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3), Witch Sight (3).

Skills: Common Tongue 90%, Dodge 63%, High Speech 17%, Melnibonéan 65%, Navigate 94%, Sailing 86%, Scribe 75%, Unknown Kingdoms 7%, Young Kingdoms 82%.

## THE LEAGUE-MASTER'S DEAL

**M**'GLAK TAKES THE adventurers below deck. He bustles with self-importance. Since he must tilt his scalp-spike to accommodate the low ceilings, adventurers who precede him stand a minor chance of being impaled. He knocks politely at a mahogany door, and a woman's voice bids him to enter. He ushers the adventurers within.

Inside is a spacious cabin cramped with books, scrolls, files and volumes of all kinds. Bookshelves cram and cover every inch of wall space. The assembled learning is recorded on cork board, vellum, plain parchment, and heavy clay block. The documents line the walls in great stacks, and teeter in piles on the tops of the shelves.

In the center of the room is a wide table, littered with books and paper. Small demonic writing implements scamper about

## THE LEAGUE-MASTER'S CABIN

the table surface, rubbing unmentionable portions of their bodies upon various blank sheets and peering with satisfaction at the symbols created thereon.

Above the table swings a large golden cage. Within it is a monkey, its head distended to reveal a giant pulsing brain. The monkey squats with glazed eyes as its demon cage chatters into its ear and turns the pages of a large book before it.

The league-master herself is a massive woman. Her black robes are covered with arcane symbols. Her face is pouched, but her eyes are bright and energetic. She studies a clay tablet upon which a sylph gently blows, clearing the detritus of ages from its surface. M'Glak announces the adventurers, with full names if he knows them.

The league-master smiles broadly and bids the adventurers to sit. To do this they must clear books and scrolls from the chairs. When they are settled, she introduces herself. "I am Shonjun Lecallis, Master of the League of Tumultuous Erudition. We are a Chaos order of knowledge and learning. In the pursuit of this knowledge we are mapping the entire world."

She looks at them, expecting an acknowledgment of this ambitious and wondrous plan. If none come forth, she frowns, since she needs people with imagination, not dullards.

Lecallis explains that scribes are sent abroad to the lands of the Young Kingdoms, there to record everything they encounter of the people, places, and customs. The editors of the league compile these accounts into volumes, which are then copied by ranks of scribes, or the Devouring Press, a demon. The books are bound and distributed throughout the Kingdoms. Thus far two volumes have been completed. Some

countries are proving more difficult than others. Seven scribes have been lost on Pan Tang alone.

"Our best scribe is missing on Melniboné. We want you to locate him or find his records." The scribe's name is Sinbos H'nd'n. Shonjun describes him as thin, with tinted green hair and four earrings in each ear.

The loss of the other scribes brings her to a second point. The wear and tear on the scribes in mapping some of the wilder places of the Young Kingdoms is proving to be a debilitating to the league. The alternative is to send demons to record the data. The league believes it has located a breed appropriate to the task. One of them is to be summoned and bound in servitude to the adventurers. The demon can record information about Melniboné along the journey. The adventurers are to escort the demon and monitor its efficiency. This way, should tragedy happen and the scribe dies and his records lost, we shall have the demon's as replacement."

Adventurers are handed an outline map of the isle of Melniboné, with the route of the scribe marked upon it. This is reproduced at the front of this scenario, and the gamemaster should hand the players a copy at this point. The adventurers are expected to fill in all details of their exploration, in case the demon does not perform properly.

## THE SOJOURNER'S GUIDES TO THE YOUNG KINGDOMS

**THE SOJOURNER'S GUIDES** are the masterworks of the League of Tumultuous Erudition. To date, two volumes have been published.

The books are about 8" by 12" and bound in leather, and are thick enough to take up half of a saddlebag. There are copies of both in the library on the *Wandering Wisdom*. The gamemaster may elect which lands have been covered, as suits the campaign, but if that does not matter then the subjects are Pan Tang and Isle of Purple Towns, respectively. Each book contains the following:

- ◆ **Maps:** accurate and well drawn, if somewhat fanciful.
- ◆ **Geography:** notes on the land, townships, climate, and the surrounding seas.
- ◆ **People:** the inhabitants, their language, culture, arts, and ways.
- ◆ **History:** the rise of the kingdoms, their great leaders, and their legends.

Information gleaned from the books has a 30% chance of being inaccurate or out-of-date. Adventurers may consult the volumes as they travel, but there is a danger of being misled by a misdirected scribe. Reading a Sojourner's Guide in its entirety adds 5 percentiles to the adventurer's Young Kingdoms skill. A hand-scribed copy of either volume can be purchased for 500 bronzes. The League needs about six months for a copyist to reproduce a book.

*These books resemble the average Elric sourcebook. Future publications may be considered additional fruits of the League's labors.*

The league-master offers payment of 5000 bronzes to every adventurer who returns, or else arcane knowledge of comparable worth.

## SHONJUN LECALLIS, MASTER OF THE LEAGUE OF TUMULTUOUS ERUDITION

**Chaos 104, Balance 71, Law 84**

STR 11 CON 14 SIZ 17 INT 23 POW 19  
DEX 10 APP 12 HP 16 MP 19

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapon:** Dagger 46%, damage 1D4+2+1D4

**Armor:** none.

**Magic:** Bounty of Straasha (4), Demon's Ear (1), Moonrise ((1), Refutation (1-4), Soul of Chardros (1-3), Summon Elemental (1), Summon Demon (1), Wings of Lassa (4), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3), Witch Sight (3).

**Skills:** Bargain 82%, Common Tongue 115%, Evaluate 89%, High Speech 19%, Insight 67%, Mabden 27%, Melnibonéan 85%, Mong 51%, Natural World 102%, Opish 40%, Potions 91%, Scholarly Debate 78%, Scribe 165%, Unknown Kingdoms 19%, Young Kingdoms 124%

## THE VOYAGE TO THE DRAGON ISLE

**ONCE THE BARGAIN** is struck the *Wandering Wisdom* turns in the direction of Melniboné. Below are descriptions of the ship and the daily routines. Gamemasters may extrapolate incidents and adventures from these as the voyage continues, or simply presume the voyage to be an uneventful one. In any case, the *Wandering Wisdom* is a vessel worth exploring.

## THE WANDERING WISDOM

**THE WANDERING WISDOM** is a bireme. She is equipped with two banks of oars, as well as sails. She is entirely crewed by scholars and scribes, with some demon and elemental aid.

**DECK:** the deck is uncrowded and polished to a high shine. Close examination and Search rolls reveal intricate glyphs carved all over the surface of the deck. These are High Speech symbols avidly meditated on by the sailor-scribes who polish and swab the deck.

**STERN:** at the stern of the deck is inscribed the sign of Chaos, for summoning purposes. Adventurers may make use of this, provided they know the True Name or breed of the demon they wish to summon. The scribes consider random summoning too dangerous and insist instead that the adventurer research for the demon desired in the ship's library.

**RIGGING:** the sails of the ship are covered by writing and can be read like enormous books. Each sail is a new volume. Many sailor-scribes sit astride the mast spars and fixedly read the sheets as their hands work mechanically at their nautical duties.



**BRIDGE:** Captain M'Glak is generally found here, consulting his demon navigator Gribblenot, a spheroid thing with a pointed head, much like the captain's hair-spike. But the demon's head rocks and points in various directions to aid the Captain's figuring.

**CABINS:** there are two decks below. On the first is the crew quarters. A cabin with six hammocks is available for the adventurers.

**LIBRARY:** between decks a space only a yard high runs the entire length of the ship. Stored in here are massive numbers of scrolls, so chosen for their better storage capacity. This is the ship's library. Kajahagag, a tiny demon with great spindly hands and a long nose, is the ship's librarian. It scoots between the decks to locate particular scrolls and brings them to readers.

Adventurers may check out only one scroll at a time and must return it before they leave the ship. A successful Common Tongue roll is necessary to comprehend the scroll. Thorough study of one of these scrolls takes 3+1D3 days. At the gamemaster's discretion, the scroll may be useful, misleading, or simply amusing. For those who cannot read, Kajahagag recommends among an excellent selection of illuminated picture scrolls, though these are mainly about scholar-adventurers performing amazing feats.

**LEAGUE-MASTER'S CABIN:** the league-master is never out of her cabin, but toils at her arcane studies the entire time. The cabin is described earlier, in 'The League-Master's Deal.'

**CAPTAIN'S CABIN:** Captain M'Glak sleeps in a large four-poster bed. The canopy is a sheet of writing, changed daily. Also in his room is a sea chest which folds out to become a well-stocked bookcase. These books are about sailing and navigation. Studying four of them increases an adventurer's Sailing and Navigate skills by 1D3 percentiles each.

**CREW QUARTERS:** a long cabin swaying with forty hammocks. The crew takes turns manning the oars, working in the rigging, or studying. The ship tends to run by sail at night, allowing rest for almost everyone.

**GALLEY:** the ship's main power comes from its banks of oars. These are not manned by slaves, but by willing crew members. Each oar has been equipped with a frame that holds an upright book. A page-turner is attached which flips a page with each backstroke of the oar. The rower-scribes are quick readers, and are keen to stay in stroke to keep those pages turning, a satisfactory arrangement all around.

## SHIP'S ROUTINE

**T**HE SHIP HAS A NUMBER of daily routines. The adventurers are welcome to join in. The scribes are greatly amused if the adventurers can't quite keep up, and suitably impressed if they can.

### MORNING

**CHANT OF KNOWLEDGE:** a convoluted oration delivered in Melnibonéan by the Captain and echoed by the crew. Those with successful Melnibonéan rolls, or merely a critical Idea roll (they don't know what the syllables mean, but they can repeat them) are considered to have repeated the words satisfactorily. Each morning the chant is different.

**CHAOS EXERCISES:** at mid-morning the scribes perform strange slow movements that represent the eight points of Chaos. These require a successful Dexterity roll to perform correctly.

### MIDDAY

**NAVIGATION:** the Captain takes his position at the helm and consults Gribblenot, his navigation demon. This is a good time for adventurers of a nautical bent to question him about his methods and perhaps pick up a few pointers.

If a prospective student is particularly persuasive, the Captain will teach either Sailing or Navigate. Presume that the Captain's skillful instruction (and the *Wandering Wisdom's* circuitous course) allows him to teach one or the other skill by the time the ship reaches Melniboné. If a roll of INTx4 or less succeeds, the student adds 1D10 percentiles in one or the other skill. Captain M'Glak accepts no fee for his service.

### AFTERNOON

**SAIL READINGS:** scribes aloft in the rigging give readings from the text upon the sails. These usually concern obscure points of Chaos theology but are sometimes more general (and more entertaining) matter, such as legends.

**DECK READINGS:** the sail readers are matched by their on-deck counterparts. The deck glyphs are always in verse. The deck-scribes match the rhythms of their scrubbing with those of the meter.

### NIGHT

**STAR SIGHTINGS:** scribes man the rigging to make detailed records of the starry skies under which the ship sails, as well as the position of each heavenly body to their current location. This is cancelled on nights of poor visibility.

**PHOSPHOROUS WATCH:** overnight, a couple of crew members stay on deck to spot phosphorescent or otherwise illuminated ocean life. Knowledge of deep-sea Chaos things is scanty and highly-prized. Adventurers may volunteer for such duty. A successful CONx5 roll is required to remain awake and a successful Search roll is needed to spot anything. There is one chance per night of a sighting, which then should be described by the player and logged by his adventurer. The first successful Search roll merits an experience check.

### SHIP'S CREW

Forty crew members serve on board the *Wandering Wisdom*, twenty-three men and seventeen women. All are devoted to the tenets of the League. Each is fortunate to be aboard such a remarkable craft. All are generally friendly and cooperative. They believe that politeness garners much valuable information from local sources, and are trained to be tolerant and ingratiating.

They are naturally and incurably curious. They freely give information, but they are greedy for recompense in the same vein. They question adventurers for every scrap of knowledge, always hoping to gain that extra bit of learning that puts them ahead of their rivals, the Order of the Brass Quill.

### ORDINARY SAILOR-SCRIBE

Sailor-scribes wear motley and colorful clothing, with a cloth badge to denote their membership in the order. They are more interested in intellectual pursuits than their own appearance, and often are somewhat rumpled and smelly, with their fingers stained black with ink.

**Chaos 71, Balance 45, Law 35**

STR 11	CON 14	SIZ 10	INT 16	POW 15
DEX 16	APP 13			HP 12

**Damage Bonus:** none.

**Weapons:** Scimitar 47%, damage 1D6+1 +db

**Armor:** 1D6-1, Sea Leather

**Spells:** Breath of Life (1), Heal (2), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3), Witch Sight (1-3).

**Skills:** Art (Sing) 36%, Climb 84%, Common Tongue 80%, Craft (Sailmaking) 37%, Craft (Carpentry) 44%, Melnibonéan 40%, Navigate 25%, Repair/Devise 64%, Sailing 50%, Scribe 68%, Unknown Kingdoms 3%, Young Kingdoms 51%.

## THE DEMON SCRIBE

ONCE WITHIN SIGHT of Melniboné the demon scribe is summoned. The league-master herself performs the summoning, at the summoning sigil on the ship's deck. It takes twelve hours. As a useful sacrifice to this sort of demon, she burns a hundred rare maps and treatises, an act causing the sailor-scribes to openly weep.

A chattering sound comes from the pile of smoldering parchments, and a small infernal figure waddles out, stuffing random pieces of flaming paper into its mouth. It is ugly and humanoid, but with writhing appendages in place of hands. Its gelid limbs are dexterous enough to grip pens and small valuable objects. It greets Lecallis in a harsh and grating voice. Only Lecallis knows its True Name, but it answers to Nokdoxor.

The demon has an infallible memory and is in all ways an excellent scribe, save one thing. Unknown to the league, Nokdoxor's personality is abrasive and opinionated. At any given time and in any situation it is guaranteed to say the most insulting, inflammatory things to anyone it meets. It amuses itself by abusing people and starting fights. The demon keeps this side of itself hidden until it is deposited on the island of Melniboné with the adventurers.

### NOKDOXOR, OBNOXIOUS DEMON SCRIBE

STR 4 CON 18 SIZ 6 INT 21 POW 15  
DEX 16 MOV 8 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** none.

**Abilities:** Carapace, 1D2 snaky skin.

**Distend,** at 40%.

**Knowledge,** at 63%, concerning Melnibonéan geography.

**See,** at 40%.

**Skills:** Common Tongue 42%, Conceal Object 30%, Dodge 32%, Own Plane 15%, Melnibonéan 20%.

**Need:** make caustic comments.

**Breed:** demon scribe.

**Magic Point Cost to Summon:** 32.

## THE DRAGON SHORES

AT LAST THE COAST of Melniboné is sighted. Captain M'Glak weighs anchor, with the intent of approaching under cover of darkness. The ship floats idly as the scholars discuss the number of hours until sundown, and whether the prevailing currents are westerly or southerly. Hours pass.

As the sun sets, the *Wandering Wisdom* approaches Melniboné from the northeast. The league-master has instructed that the sailor-scribes will investigate two of the smaller islands while the adventurers are on the mainland. She avoids Amashii, the northwestern isle in the Dragon Sea, as she believes the tales of abundant sea serpents there. Even her curiosity has limits.

As the ship draws near the coast of Wa'aiya'oro those scribes not involved with rowing or rigging cluster at the rail.



GASSNER 93

"I'VE NEVER SEEN SO MANY GREAT POISONOUS PLANTS! TRY ONE."

Competition for good viewing spots is intense. The island is completely forested, tangles of dense vegetation everywhere. A Listen roll detects the calls of distant animals, but the distance is too great and the night too dark to identify them. Two scribes set off in a small boat crammed with nets and bottles. They are nervous but resolute.

The ship swings around the isle and closer to the shore of the mainland, and thus passes the southernmost isle, Kiashu. In the moonlight, Kiashu reveals splendid white beaches and a confusion of mountains and forests beyond, with the high snow peaks of its inner mountains towering improbably over all. Two scribes are also put ashore here.

Finally the *Wandering Wisdom* cuts her way across to the mainland, avoiding the reefs by running as close to the coast of Kiashu as M'Glak dares.

## ASHORE

LECALLIS ORDERS THE lowering of a boat and comes and clasps the hands of the adventurers warmly. "Bring back knowledge, my friends. Knowledge blooms like the brightest flower, but it will never fade under the careful ministrations of the League of Tumultuous Erudition!"

The ship is to return to the coast at midnight ten days hence. It will come once more to this same place one week after that. If the adventurers have failed to return, in a month's time the Wandering Wisdom is due to present itself in Imrryr as part of a trading group. If the adventurers can make their way to Dreaming City, the league officials will be briefed and on the lookout for them.

The boat is readied. The demon, Nokdoxtor, is sat in the stern of the craft. It remains silent. Once the adventurers are secured in the boat, scribes row them to the shores of the Dragon Isle, and quickly return to the ship.

The adventurers are deposited near the site of the ancient city of A'sha'hiiian. The bulk of the ruins can be seen in the journey to the coast. They may, if they wish, detour there and examine them, otherwise they may choose any direction.

## TOURING MELNIBONÉ

**A**LLOW THE ADVENTURERS a free hand in defining their route around Melniboné. The missing scribe is located at the far end of the isle, so it really does not matter which way the party decides to go. The areas and encounters described below follow no sequence. For convenience, they are presented in roughly counter-clockwise order: A'sha'hiiian, the Wild Coast, the Golden Hills, the Meadows of Lassitude, the Isolated Fells, the Intangible Forest, the Encircling Hills, and the Shores of the Boiling Sea, respectively.

One encounter is presented for each area. There is a brief physical description of the locale, which can be supplemented by the more detailed discussion in the *Melniboné* chapter. Since the map they have been given shows no interior detail, the adventurers may wish to know what to call the various sections of the country through which they are traveling.

Passing slaves are a good source of such knowledge. Some are astonished to see free humans in the interior of Melniboné, since that is forbidden, but most have no knowledge of that law. So few Melnibonéans travel the interior that the prohibition is somewhat hypothetical.



Each encounter also includes sections on what information might be learned about the missing scribe in each locale, and what Nokdoxtor's opinion is of the area.

These encounters should not be the only excitement adventurers have upon this strangest of lands. Use the 'Encounters on Melniboné' in this book to create further episodes. The *Melniboné Digest* lists many peoples that they might conceivably meet. The *Melniboné* chapter gives further information about the geography of the isle, and places of note. The adventurers have a rare chance to explore the mainland of Melniboné, and should be free to savor the experience.

No encounters are given for Imrryr, although all of the other scenarios in this book begin there. If the adventurers wish to dally in the Dreaming City, there is ample material to keep them amused and in peril for their entire stay.

## A'SHA'HIIAN

**T**HE MARBLE RUINS OF THE First City lie quiet and calm in the morning sun. This is an excellent place for the adventurers to pitch their first camp while they plan their exploration of the isle.

**INFORMATION:** a successful Track roll finds fresh human boot prints in the ruined streets. In an empty villa, a successful Search roll discovers a campsite of ashes, a broken specimen jar, and a few crumpled attempts to map A'sha'hiiian, signed by Sinbos H'nd'n. The camp is over a month old.

### THE DEMON'S THOUGHTS:

On A'sha'hiiian: "So this is the cradle of their civilization, eh? Should have been drowned at birth."

On the missing scribe: "I figure anyone who vanishes on Melniboné is only half as stupid as the person who volunteers to go looking for him."

## THE WILD COAST

**A** ROCKY, RUGGED COASTLINE fends off the pounding waves of the Dragon Sea. The encounter described below presumes at some stage the adventurers stray near the cliffs.

### THE BATTERED SHIP

As adventurers traverse the coastline, a successful Search brings their attention to a wreck of a ship on the rocks below. It is a low sloop. There is no sign of any crew.

The cliff above the rocks is steep and jagged, and a Climb roll is needed to descend safely. If the adventurers reach the wreck they find a mean ship with little in the way of equipment, already looted. The ship's name is *Laughing Vile Death*.

A Search roll reveals a tattered, seawater-soaked ship's log. The log records a heavy storm and the ship's mast breaking, killing the Captain as it fell. A last desperate entry reveals a dash for the beach, and shelter. There are three moldering dead men in the wreck, two Jharkorians and a Tarkeshite.

Earlier entries seem to suggest that the craft engaged in piracy, but (since only shipowners and harbor masters reliably inspect the logbook) the descriptions are circumspect.



## THE SURVIVORS

Upon this inhospitable shore the wreck's survivors eke out an unpleasant existence. They are pirates, a motley bunch out of Jharkor. They made an abortive attempt on the Wild Coast, hoping to find strange plants, substances, and buried riches. Only ten now survive.

They have been living in caves and stewing driftwood, sea shells, and shoes for food. The ship's meager stores ran out three days ago. They are crazed with hunger, desperation and fear. Their new captain is the quartermaster, Lopo Bedinbin. Lopo is a one-armed man with a squint, who is fast approaching the ragged edge of sanity. When he speaks he finishes every sentence with a rhetorical question, and has been given to screaming "Bleed the donkey!" in his sleep. Despite this, he is the most stable member of the crew. Lopo fears the crew will soon kill him and eat him if he cannot lead them to safety.

The pirates are on the lookout for any travelers in the area, and consider the adventurers blessings from the gods. They beg the adventurers for help. Failing that, they may try capture the adventurers, although their physical condition is weak. These pirates have several options.

- **REPAIRING THE SHIP:** if the adventurers have any aptitude as carpenters and shipwrights, the pirates are keen to have their craft rebuilt and to get off this island. They may split up their group and set some of the adventurers to work while the rest of the group explore inland.
- **EXPLORING THE ISLAND:** the pirates know little about Melniboné save that it is dangerous. They take the adventurers on a trip inland for supplies and perhaps to recoup their fortunes. The adventurers, so far as the pirates are concerned, are handy, dispensable crew. Should the party exhibit knowledge of the area, or of plants or wildlife, the pirates' esteem them.
- **SELLING THE ADVENTURERS AS SLAVES:** the pirates may decide they can turn a healthy profit by trading the adventurers to the Melnibonéans. They try this if the party looks useful, but not in a way that helps the pirates.
- **KEEL-HAUL THE QUARTERMASTER:** the pirates will mutiny and kill Lopo if an adventurer looks like a better leader. They swear allegiance to their new captain, offering Lopo's blood as the ink with which to sign the deal.

The pirate crew make a dangerous nuisance, and may be hard to shake off. Their greed is a continual hazard if they join the adventurers, as most have eyes only for profit. Nokdoxor delights in stirring up trouble between them and the adventurers.

**INFORMATION:** the pirates have not seen the scribe, nor anyone else since their shipwreck. They lie about him in an effort to trick the adventurers, but Fast Talk or simple cross-examination soon exposes their ignorance.

**THE DEMON'S THOUGHTS:** to the pirates: "Obviously the storm that laid you jokers low had all the strength of a gentle breeze. With your sort of seamanship you should be highwaymen. Anybody got a small bronze coin so that I can hire this bunch as retainers for a year?"

On the coast: "I've seen friendlier places in the Nine Hells."

## THE GOLDEN HILLS

**T**HE GOLDEN HILLS ARE made up of softly rolling hills and verdant trees and shrubs. Forests abound, within which a riot of plant and animal life thrives,

## THE BOTANIST AND THE BOLE

Deep in one of the thickest forests, a Melnibonéan noble, Prince Merriva'an, is hunting. Five docile slaves accompany him. He seeks a tree called *Kri'isin'nii*. The bole of this tree is said to give forth one single flower, from which may be extracted a drug that sways the mind utterly of whoever takes it. He wishes to administer this to his lover, Lady Jelen Haslo'on, whom he insists is being wooed away by his rival, a captain of one of the battle-barges, Kyuin D'oy.

The Prince does not consider this unfair, since he knows that his rival is also using sorcery. The danger is that *Kri'isin'nii* devours the energies of living creatures about it. Merriva'an will not tell the adventurers this. Once he encounters them, rather than waste his slaves he plans that the adventurers will be the sacrifices who distract the tree while he gains the precious bud.

If the adventurers survive, the Prince reports them as human spies, and a troop of guards are dispatched to capture or kill them. Humans are, after all, forbidden beyond the harbor.

He is charming and helpful, and offers the adventurers his story, leaving out the part about the danger of the tree, and exaggerating the number of flowers to a dozen. He paints Kyuin as an uncaring ape who has the lady in his thrall. In this way he hopes to lure the adventurers to assist him.

Natural World rolls enable the adventurers to find *Kri'isin'nii*. The tree slumbers in a vale that is dead of all life save its hideous pulsating self. It is a broad and leafy evergreen, tinged with gold and russet. One small yellow flower grows at the base of the tree.

The tree is ravenously hungry for life force, and drains outright any life within five yards of it. Its deep questing roots suck nourishment from the earth, and it has leeches all life from the soil in the valley, killing all of the other plants. It thrives in an expanse of sterility and silence.

The tree is capable of moving its branches to snare victims, but it prefers not to unless it they are likely to escape. Adventurers who wish to pluck the flower must succeed in both Dexterity and Dodge rolls to snatch the bloom and run. If the flower is picked, *Kri'isin'nii* rapidly wilts and dies. The bark peels, the leaves rot, and foul-smelling sap dribbles from the bole.

If Merriva'an gains the flower, he returns to Imrryr. He brews the petals into a potion and gives it to Jelen to drink. She falls irrevocably in love with him, but to a degree both obsessive and destructive. She will not leave his side, not even to sleep or eat, and suicides if she is ever separated from him for even a few moments. She is dead within the week. He writes a tragic opera about their love, and is the toast of the Dreaming City.

### PRINCE MERRIVA'AN, TRAGIC LOVER

Merriva'an is slender and pale, and obviously more accustomed to luxury than to hiking cross-country. His eyes are soft and dark. He is dressed in fashionable traveling clothing, most of which is impractical. His new boots hurt his feet, his sweeping silken green cloak is forever snagging on brambles, and his padded reversible tunic is too warm by far.

Chaos 240, Balance 38, Law 80

STR 11 CON 10 SIZ 18 INT 17 POW 18  
DEX 12 APP 16 HP 14

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Carved Narwhal Tusk Walking Stick 25%, damage 1D6+1D4

Bone Bow 63%, damage 1D8+2+1D2

Armor: 1-point quilted clothing.

—continued next page

## PRINCE MERRIVA'AN, CONTINUED

**Spells:** Heal (2), Visage of Arioeh (1-3), Wisdom of Stortar (1-3).  
**Skills:** Art (Compose Tragic Opera) 132%, Art (Courtly Manners) 97%, Art (Unfolding Paper Sculpture) 89%, Bargain 44%, High Speech 7%, Melnibonéan 111%, Natural World 26%, Oratory 84%, Potions 32%, Scribe 75%, Witch Sight 55%.

## KRI'ISIN'NII, THE HUNGRY TREE

STR 16 CON 20 SIZ 50 INT 20 POW 18  
 DEX 3 MOV 0 HP 35

**Damage Bonus:** +3D6.

**Armor:** 8-point bark.

**Weapons:** Grasp 55%, holds victim unless STR:STR roll succeeds.

**Ability:** Drain, at 100%, in a five yard radius.

It costs the victim 1D6 magic points unless a roll of POW:POW resistance table succeeds. The victim feels a nagging headache and listlessness, but nothing that indicates the tree is the source. If Kri'isin'nii's attack fails, the target senses hostility from the tree, and a feeling of being probed and explored that is both intangible and disturbing. Victims with zero magic points fall unconscious, after which the tree drains them of 1D3 points of POW per round until they are lifeless.

**Skills:** Sense Life 100%.

**INFORMATION:** Merriva'an has seen a green-haired slave attached to a party of nobles, picnicking in the area just south east of the Isolated Fells. They may yet be there. He exchanges this information for the adventurers' help.

**THE DEMON'S THOUGHTS:** On Merriva'an: "If this is a higher race, give me the stupid people every time. Present company excepted."

On the area: "I have a friend, lives not many planes away. Kills plants at a touch. You want I should call him?" If the poor adventurers decide to call such a creature with the name Nokdoxor gives them, they get another of his breed. The two demons comment endlessly on everything and fight between themselves.

## THE MEADOWS OF LASSITUDE

**H**ERE ARE THE BEAUTIFUL meadows with their plethora of strange unearthly plants yielding all manner of drugs.

## THE GARDEN OF NO RETURN

Within the meadows is a quiet vale thick with flowers, known as The Garden of No Return. The garden is a maze of high hedges shot through with strange flowers of all kinds. In the heart of the maze blooms a garden of wondrous plants.

The maze has a hidden magical pattern which, once walked, traps the stroller forever. Within, aimless people meander about, slaves and Melnibonéans alike, their minds gone as they continue to wander within the strange garden. They eat fruit and seem content enough, but they can never leave.

The scent of the flowers is soporific. After a while in the maze, those trapped have no desire to leave. The potency of this effect begins at one, or as the gamemaster sees fit, and increases by one point for each succeeding hour. Match this against the CON of the adventurer as a Resistance Table roll. Overcome, he or she is lost until rescued by a stronger-willed person. Again the gamemaster decides if a Resistance Table roll is necessary.

Grant one adventurer a Luck roll each hour. If he or she succeeds, the adventurer witnesses an escape. The person weaves drunkenly, staying on the same spot. A successful Idea roll allows the adventurer to perceive that these deliberate steps are not a dance but a performance of the same pattern of twists and turns that they made in traversing the maze, just reversed and performed in one location. A Dexterity roll allows him or her to copy it accurately.

This is the only way out, to walk the pattern of the maze backwards in one place. Then the adventurer realizes that he or can see the Meadows of Lassitude beyond the flowers, and can push past the plants to freedom. Any reasonable plan to rescue the other adventurers deserves to succeed.

## THE LOST

Take denizens of the maze from the 'Melnibonéan Digest' if you need. They are all relaxed and pleasant, but bewildered, as they know they have forgotten something important.

**INFORMATION:** the scribe was here and got out. A Search roll discovers a page of his notebook, with a description of the garden. He has signed the bottom of the page, as is his habit. The page is found face downwards. On the back, facing up, is the plan of the garden the scribe has sketched. There are smudges of footprints on the paper.

**THE DEMON'S THOUGHTS:** on the Garden: "I hate flowers. They make me sneeze. Aaaachoo! It's okay, that stuff doesn't stick to skin, really."

On the Meadows: "Now I know what's wrong with these people. They live in a place like this."

## THE ISOLATED FELLS

**H**ILLS OF BRACKEN AND heather sweep across this part of the island. It is chill here, and of a desolation almost poetical.

## THE SLAVE MURAL

A group of human slaves are journeying through the Fells, returning from the Lake of Moon and laden with silver. The leader of the slaves is Raxis, a thirteen year old boy. He is surprised to meet strangers abroad. "My mistress, Lady Mabov, has gathered every walking person in these parts, to serve in her mural."

Lady Mabov's encampment is but two hours' walk. The splendor of the Melnibonéans' camp is overwhelmed by the enormity of the work of art before them. Almost a quarter of a mile long there stands a twenty foot high wall. Upon this wall is painted scenes of battle in vivid colors. In the blink of an eye, these colors and figures move to become a family portrait, or a field of flowers.

This staggering achievement is in fact a wall of men and women, all naked and each painted a different solid and vivid color. The missing scribe, H'nd'n, is among them, drugged into a blissful sleep and painted orange. He is easily identified by his four earrings. A Search roll notices him.

A party of Melnibonéan nobles watches as a beautiful and stately woman gives directions to other slaves who in turn shout commands along the wall. At her behest, the picture is changing and changing. She is entranced with her work, her eyes shining fixedly.



"AMUSE US."

## TERMINAL ENNUI

The rest of the Melnibonéans look, and indeed are, stupefyingly bored. Their leader is the Lady's brother, Myrrus, who has the adventurers seized as they approach his group or the wall. He has over a hundred slaves at his command, many well-armed, and brooks no arguments.

Myrrus raises a bored eyebrow upon regarding the adventurers. It would seem that these impertinent humans appear to be roaming the sacred land of the Dragon Isle without permission, and should thus be executed. However, he is too lethargic to think up a torture witty enough for the purpose.

If the adventurers ask about the missing scribe, Myrrus allows them to look for him on the wall. Once he has heard the adventurers' story, he asks, in bored tones, "Now give me one reason why you should not join him. And a further reason why you should not be executed for your trespass here. Better yet, amuse me. For if you bring some relief to my friends and myself, who are suffering the agony of unrelieved tedium, then I shall not only let you free, but convince my sister to replace your friend with another body, and you may take him along as well."

How the adventurers amuse the bored Melnibonéans is up to the players. The Melnibonéans have seen and done everything. If the adventurers manage to amuse Myrrus and his entourage, he is as good as his word. If not, they must do some quick thinking or some formidable fighting to escape.

In judging whether the players come up with something sufficiently diverting, there is one easy test: is the gamemaster amused, or surprised? This is a perfect gauge of the depths of their ingenuity. If they can make the gamemaster laugh with pleasure, or perform some entirely unexpected or ingenious spectacle, they should be allowed to go free. Appropriate skill rolls may assist. In this situation, a fumble is of as much interest as a critical.

**INFORMATION:** the scribe is here, as described above. Part of the adventurers' task is complete. Unfortunately, he has lost all of his notes.

**THE DEMON'S THOUGHTS:** on the Melnibonéans: "What a boring bunch. You reckon it's the drug use or the congenital stupidity that makes them like this? I've seen more life in a bone-yard."

**ON THE FELL:** "The Dragon Isle? Looks more like the Bracken Isle to me."

**TO H'ND'N:** "I'm your replacement. You're fired. Nothing personal. You were doing a great job there as wallpaper, it suited your intellectual capacity."

## THE MISSING SCHOLAR

H'nd'n is pleasantly stoned, and objects mildly to accompanying the adventurers. In a day or so he straightens out, and thanks them for rescuing him. He is open, friendly and keenly perceptive. He is eager to compare experiences on Melniboné. He has



## SNIZZBINGS

**SNIZZBINGS ARE SMALL** pulsating worms with teeth and six appendages which may be legs. Unlike most demons, they cannot be negotiated with; if summoned, and that is attempted, they may freely choose to remain with their summoner, in the hope that he will provide a good meal, either in his own person or from those he may lead them to. They have no personalities, but do emit an annoying whines when hungry.

A snizzbing reproduces after consuming hit points of blood equal to its siz. The demon hides in a crevice or in folded clothing, then splits messily into two smaller snizzbings, which attempt to remain concealed for eight days while maturing, and then seek to feed. Allow division whenever a snizzbing attack equals 4 on the Bite damage roll.

Snizzbings ordinarily attack as one, once per day, but here the gamemaster should first stage annoyance attacks in order to first give D'Bravad's behavior some scope.

Allow the adventurers to make sweep attacks against these creatures, slaying one for every four points of damage inflicted. For example, a broadsword hit for 10 points of damage slays two of them.

### SAMPLE SNIZZBING,

A DEMON WORM THAT GNAWS

STR 3	CON 4	SIZ 4	INT 3	POW 12
DEX 15	MOV slither 9			HP 4

Damage Bonus: none.

Ability: Bite, at 20%, damage 1D4.

Need: drink fresh blood at least once a week.

Breed: snizzbing.

formulated a complex theory that the isle is a living metaphor for the ailing emperor Sadric, which only he can understand.

### SINBOS H'ND'N

Chaos 64, Balance 51, Law 55

STR 12	CON 15	SIZ 10	INT 17	POW 12
DEX 9	APP 14			HP 13

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: none.

Armor: none.

Spells: Heal (2), Liken Shape (4), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3), Witch Sight (3).

Skills: Common Tongue 85%, High Speech 9%, Melnibonéan 73%, Natural World 63%, Navigate 52%, Oratory 81%, Physik 51%, Sailing 50%, Scribe 120%, Search 55%, Unknown Kingdoms 4%, Young Kingdoms 73%.

## THE INTANGIBLE FOREST

**T**HE MIST-SHROUDED DEPTHS of the Intangible Forest are a spectral wonder, mossy and abounding with surprising life.

### THE HAUNTED DEPTHS

Deep in the forest is the mad Pan Tangian escaped slave, Trugose D'Bravad. He lives in a make-shift tree house and

spends his time making mist-sculptures of demons he wishes to summon but has not the sacrifice to do so.

He has had one successful summoning, by bargaining with the sum of his own flesh. However, the summoning went awry, and instead of a demon who could teleport from this place he called up a snizzbing, one of a flesh-eating worm-like breed which spawns after feeding. There are now fifty of them.

The creatures feed each day on the wretched Pan Tangian, but never so much as to kill him. He is in constant pain, and desperate to find substitute fodder for the demons. The adventurers will do nicely.

In fact, of course, D'Bravad could dismiss the snizzbings at any time, but in his madness he has convinced himself that the dismissing procedure does not work. He will refuse to dismiss them even at the pain of death. If the adventurers kill him, the snizzbings are free to return to their own plane. Maybe some will.

D'Bravad was once a solid and oddly handsome sorcerer. Now he is a gaunt and scarred madman, with only the rags of his slave robes for equipment and demons for company. The Snizzbings have consumed his left ear, three fingers on each hand, all his toes except for the middle on the left foot, and sundry other bite-size pieces from his diminishing frame.

Snizzbings move faster than a human runner. When commanded they form a kind of carpet for D'Bravad to stand upon and pursue any quarry. "Oh get them, my pets!" he implores his slithering pack. "Feed upon their sweetmeats and leave me be! Then return me to Pan Tang, or kill me, but finish this exile!"

Trugose was insane when taken as a slave. Now he is a ranting, drooling maniac. He makes a less philosophical adversary than is usually found on the Dragon Isle.

### TRUGOSE D'BRAVAD, THE MAD PAN TANGIAN

Chaos 130, Balance 15, Law 41

STR 16	CON 16	SIZ 15	INT 17	POW 19
DEX 8	APP 4			HP 16

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Armor: none.

Weapons: Brawl 37%, damage 1D3+1D4  
Sharpened Stick 51%, damage 1D6+1+1D4

Spells: Buzzard Eyes (1), Hell's Sharp Flame (1-4), Midnight (1), Pox (1), Summon Demon (1).

Skills: Common Tongue 95%, Dodge 45%, Mabden 30%, Melnibonéan 22%, Navigate 65%, Oratory 32%, Rant & Rave 135%, Search 55%.

**INFORMATION:** the scribe has not been here. Adventurers may establish his route as being around the western coast of the island, from his conspicuous absence from any of the areas on this side.

### THE DEMON'S THOUGHTS:

**ON THE PAN TANGIAN:** "Cheery company this guy. If demons are eating him they must have stronger stomachs than I've got."

**ON THE FOREST:** "Do you know most of the insect life I've seen here is deadly? Take the thing crawling up your leg for instance . . ."

## THE ENCIRCLING HILLS

**T**HESE STEEP HILLS ARE cliffs and old dunes circling the Plain of Imrryr. Sea shells and other aquatic residue is found here. Natural World rolls conclude that this was an earlier shore for the isle.

### THE STONE FISH

Here among the trees and grassy hills are the remains of a stone fish. The fish is massive, its spine running like a great rock formation over two entire hills. A Young Kingdoms roll reveals this fish to be a *gloopuyla*, a favorite beast of Straasha. A successful Million Spheres roll, library research, or query to a demon of knowledge reveals its special significance. If one sacrifices one point of POW to Straasha while touching the skeleton, a scale breaks off whole, new, and shining blue. Used as a shield, this scale blocks all attacks by any sea creature, save those of Chaos things. If it is returned to the sea with thanks, Straasha grants one year's bountiful fishing as a reward.

There are thousands of scales, since this fish was so enormous. Adventurers may take as many as they have POW to spare.

**INFORMATION:** the missing scribe never made it this far. Searching this area convinces the adventurers that he plainly took the Wild Coast route.

**THE DEMON'S THOUGHTS:** of the area it sings, "Oh give me a home, where the fish are all stone, and the kelp and the seaweed are clay."

## THE SHORES OF THE BOILING SEA

**T**HESE SHORES OFFER LOW cliffs, with warm water and beaches of white sand. There are scattered patches of mangrove swamp. The beaches of the Boiling Sea are where the adventurers must wait for the ship to return.

### THE IRON SAGES

A party from the Order of the Brass Quill is here, traveling across Melniboné. They are attempting exactly what the League of Tumultuous Erudition have been trying, but for quite different reasons.

The party is five strong, and led by Compiler Grut. They ride an enormous metal crab. All wear the uniform of the Brass Quill, a white robe with a brass Arrow of Law embossed upon the breast, a helm that resembles the nib of a quill and yields no combat protection, and sensible boots.

The Lawful sages are not out to harm the adventurers, but are certainly curious about them. Grut is keen to find out what they know, how long they have been traveling, what obstacles they may have encountered, and would very much like to see their map. He becomes antagonistic if the adventurers (or the demon) offer no help, or flaunt their knowledge. In those cases his clear duty to confiscate their records (though not their demon), even though the data is likely to be subtly polluted by the extravagances of Chaos. H'nd'n huddles behind the adventurers, and will not himself resist.

The adventurers might convince the Brass Quill researchers to leave them alone, this requiring a lengthy philosophical argument. Grut is glad to debate. Each side should roll Oratory until one side fails. Grut's arguments are next, followed by



H'nd'n's arguments. If an adventurer has a higher Oratory, he or she should advance the arguments.

### GRUT'S ARGUMENTS

- Knowledge is the property of scholars.
- Unless properly stored, knowledge becomes distorted and is eventually lost.
- The Disordered Scribes are sloppy and unscholarly, with poor regard for footnoting, documenting, correlation, and rigorous analysis.
- The thread used to bind the *Sojourner's Guides* is inferior.

### H'ND'N'S ARGUMENTS:

- Knowledge is free to everyone.
- Knowledge grows and strengthens in the telling, as each new mind adds to its total weight.
- The Iron Sages are repressed and retentive, lacking creativity, fresh ideas, genuine insight, or lateral thinking.
- The nibs the Iron Sages use are so sharp they score right through the parchment, leaving their books in scraps and nightmarish pieces.

### NOKDOXTOR'S ARGUMENTS:

- Knowledge takes brains, and no one here seems to have any.
- Knowledge is much better buried in a locked box at the bottom of the ocean than in the hands of idiot sages and illiterate scribes.
- Both groups have all the scholarly prowess of a tribe of monkeys beset with diarrhea.
- Grut's feet smell, and H'nd'n's haircut makes him look like he has a vine growing out of his head.

The scholars argue for a time, with interjections from the demon and the adventurers, as they wish. If an adventurer makes a point or shows reasonable signs of intelligence, Grut honors their victory, and the Iron Sages depart, to continue their own assessment of the Dragon Isle.

The adventurers are also free to threaten the use of force in order to seize the records of the Lawful scholars. A better

## THE ORDER OF THE BRASS QUILL

**THE IRON SAGES** of the Order of the Brass Quill are the rivals of the Disordered Scribes of the League of Tumultuous Erudition. They were founded in Vilmir, but have spread throughout those lands which are bastions of Law. They were originally a fanatic sect of the cult of Arkyn, who then broke away and formed their own order.

The Iron Sages believe that they must record, catalog, and codify everything known in the Young Kingdoms. They disapprove of the haphazard misinformation dispensed by the League of Tumultuous Erudition. Rather than share learning, the Order of the Brass Quill locks it away, piece by piece, all through the lands of Law. Everything thus known and unshared, nothing can change, and all mystery, speculation, and wonder must end. In this way Law and the One Way can come to every land.



solution would be to exchange all data, so that both groups have more than they began with.

This encounter demonstrates the enmity between the two groups, and their essential lack of difference.

### COMPILER GRUT OF THE BRASS QUILL

Grut leads the expedition. He is a big cold-eyed man with an out-thrust jaw, the stout rock around which the other sages revolve. He is utterly involved in his mission, and utterly convinced of the divine need to deliver knowledge into the locked vaults of Law.

**Chaos 28, Balance 51, Law 89**

STR 15	CON 17	SIZ 18	INT 18	POW 14
DEX 12	APP 13			HP 18

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6.

**Weapons:** Brass Club 90%, damage 1D8 +1D6

**Armor:** 1D3-1 (no helm), reinforced cloth

**Spells:** No Iron Sage would ever commit such heresy.

**Skills:** Dodge 37%, Evaluate 70%, Insight 50%, Make Emphatic Pronouncement 90%, Natural World 80%, Navigate 30%, Oratory 81%, Physik 45%, Scribe 100%, Search 87%, Unknown Kingdoms 10%, Young Kingdoms 85%.

### SAGE HORDAK OF THE BRASS QUILL

Hordak is a small woman with the look of a zealot. She continuously commits information to a small pad with a frantic shorthand. She is too busy writing to look up or take any action, even when in danger.

**Chaos 15, Balance 61, Law 90**

STR 12	CON 11	SIZ 8	INT 14	POW 12
DEX 16	APP 11		HP 10	MP 12

**Damage Bonus:** none.

**Weapons:** Sharpened Stylus 30%, damage 1D3.

**Armor:** 1D3-1 (no helm), reinforced cloth

**Skills:** Listen 86%, Scribe (Shorthand) 80%, Young Kingdoms 40%.

### SAGE BENTEN OF THE BRASS QUILL

Benten is a fiftyish man with the pursed lips and disapproving face of a genuine pedant and bureaucrat. He loudly corrects any mispronunciations, bad grammar, or erroneous facts.

**Chaos 60, Balance 07, Law 81**

STR 9	CON 13	SIZ 11	INT 17	POW 12
DEX 8	APP 9		HP 12	MP 12

**Damage Bonus:** none.

**Weapons:** none.

**Armor:** 1D3-1 (no helm), reinforced cloth

**Skills:** Insight 3%, Look Disapproving 75%, Scribe 44%, Young Kingdoms 61%.

### CARTOGRAPHER SHENNIS OF THE BRASS QUILL

Shennis is a tall, athletic woman with a stern expression and a good sense of humor. She undertakes all of the dangerous tasks, such as scaling cliffs and climbing trees. She is working on a definitive map of Melniboné.

**Chaos 29, Balance 81, Law 70**

STR 15	CON 14	SIZ 17	INT 16	POW 13
DEX 14	APP 11		HP 16	MP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Weapons:** Brass-shod Quarterstaff 76%, damage 1D8 +1D4

**Armor:** 1D3-1 (no helm), reinforced cloth

**Skills:** Climb 88%, Dodge 83%, Jump 63%, Navigate 93%, Sailing 79%, Scribe 63%, Swim 75%.

### DOGSBODY SNOOT, LACKEY

Snoot is a small repressed clod burdened with equipment that even the crab can't carry.

**Chaos 18, Balance 09, Law 57**

STR 11	CON 9	SIZ 7	INT 9	POW 8
DEX 10	APP 6		HP 8	MP 8

**Damage Bonus:** none.

**Weapons:** none.

**Armor:** 1D3-1 (helm on), reinforced cloth.

**Skills:** Fetch and Carry 50%, Move Quietly 13%, Whine 90%.

### LAWFUL CONVEYANCE #16, GIANT METAL CRAB

The sentient mechanical crab is broad enough to carry the sages and most of their gear. If there is a threat, it seeks to scuttle away, bearing them to safety. If there is no retreat, it turns and engages. The crab is the sages' only real hope of survival in a hostile country.

STR 30	CON 30	SIZ 30	INT 15	POW 15
DEX 15	MOV 8			HP 30

**Damage Bonus:** +3D6.

**Weapons:** Claw (x2), at 50%, damage 1D6+3D6.

Trample, 80%, damage 6D6 on fallen opponents only.

**Armor:** 10-pt metal shell.

**Skills:** Clack Claws Menacingly 70%, Scuttle Over any but Vertical Terrain 90%.

### THE DEMON'S THOUGHTS:

**ON THE COAST:** "Muck and marsh. This place is stickier than Pyaray's eight armpits."

**ON THE BRASS QUILL:** "Looky, looky, looky. Tin Heads from the Plane Ridiculous. You're late, guys, we've already got this place pegged. We know everything, and we murdered all our sources so you'll never find out what."



## RESULTS AND REWARDS

**T**HE WANDERING WISDOM awaits the adventurers as appointed. The league-master is anxious for news. She hopes that the adventurers have managed to rescue H'nd'n, or at least to replace him and his information with well-documented data of their own.

If they have failed, Lecallis is regretful, but understanding. After all, the Dragon Isle is a challenge that her best people have yet to crack. She rewards the adventurers for their valiant effort by taking them to the nearest convenient port, and giving them five hundred bronzes apiece.

If they succeeded, they not only receive the full payment, but have endeared themselves to a useful society of people.

Gamemasters may wish to introduce the League of Tumultuous Erudition in future scenarios, as a source of aid and information.

If the adventurers have shown themselves to be ready workers, and have not done anything wilfully ignorant or brutal, Lecallis invites any open-minded persons of a scholarly bent to join the Disordered Scribes.

Neither of the research teams put ashore on Wa'aiya'oro and Kiashu have returned (having fallen prey to hungry animals and hungry plants, respectively). If the gamemaster desires a further scenario, Lecallis asks the adventurers to go in search of more missing scribes.

Finally, Lecallis asks the adventurers to submit a report on the performance of the demon scribe Nokdoxor. If they presents an unfavorable view of the creature, Lecallis sighs with regret, and then binds him into an inkwell. Nokdoxor barely has enough time to accuse them of plagiarism before he disappears into the object with a foul pop. Lecallis presents the inkwell to the adventures as a memento of their sojourn on Melniboné. ☹



# THE SUFFER GLASS

**I**N THE DARK days of Melniboné's civil war, when the people of that strange race fought each other to decide whether they would serve Chaos or the Balance, there existed a repository of great Chaos power, the Suffer Glass. So arcane was the artifact that even the brilliant Melnibonéans could not fathom it. Before they could tap its promise of ultimate Chaos, the Suffer Glass was destroyed during a siege upon Castle Crow, the place where it was kept.

Thousands of years later there comes a Melnibonéan with a passion for his people's past and a fear of the future. Doctor Qua, a sorcerer, has been dabbling in the idea of shifting planes to accomplish time-travel. He has created a drug with which he can alter consciousness sufficiently to transport the imbibor to another era. This is temporary, and it is only with great manipulation of sorcerous forces that the doctor can allow the time travelers to interact with their new dimension in anything but a passive sense.

He has managed to consolidate this technique, enough to put his plan into action. On a vision-trip into the future he saw the fall of Melniboné. He mistakenly attributes this to the peoples of Pan Tang, who he sees as the greatest threat to the Bright Empire. Qua believes that with the Suffer Glass restored to Melniboné, the gods of Chaos will heed the Melnibonéans rather than the upstart humans. The Pan Tangians and other human peoples will be expunged, and Melniboné's future secured, perhaps even enhanced. It could mean a new flowering of the Bright Empire.

To effect this Doctor Qua has one simple need. He requires someone to stop the Suffer Glass from being destroyed in the attack on Castle Crow during the Civil War. Their mere presence will accomplish this, as such a Chaotic intrusion stymies the laws of the Balance. He has the extant pieces of the glass in his possession, which means that if it is not destroyed in the void of history, he will own the artifact complete. Then he can study it and put it to proper use.

## THE HATE BEAST

**T**HE SCENARIO BEGINS with the adventurers gathered in one of the harbor taverns in the Foreign Quarter of the city of Imrryr. The place is the Tormented Inn. The Inn is called thus for its strange

architecture, said to have been affected by a demon attack upon the humans who gather there. The Melnibonéans refer to it as such, because they reason that the place is tormented by having humans reside in it.

The place is strange and twisted, with ceilings that slope at odd angles, corridors that lead nowhere, and uneven floors. Ceiling and structural beams thrust through walls and floors. Doorways of unusual shape slump as though forgotten in corners. The angles of certain rooms suggest that of a listing ship.

For all that, it is comfortable enough, and one of the few friendly places for those on Melniboné who are not native. The innkeeper is Grop Bedeeber, a fat man with a strange cast to his features. Bedeeber is in fact a quarter-breed Melnibonéan, but is not responsive to prying questions about his ancestry. He runs the place with the aid of a single slave called Poursweepslop.

On the afternoon in question the tavern is crowded with oily-bearded, beer-swilling Tarkeshites, sailors from a northern ship recently put in to trade in Imrryr. It is loud and noisy in the public bar, and amidst the riotous assembly a stranger makes his entrance.

## THE STRANGER

The stranger is thin and hooded, and by his bearing and step may be taken for a Melnibonéan, although he is somewhat short. A successful Search roll glimpses dark eyes and silver hair beneath his hood, and the dance of gaudy colors beneath his somber cloak. A demon accompanies him, a squat, toad-like thing with ten legs and a tiny pimple for a head on top of its enormous body. This tiny head jabbars obscenities and scowls at everyone, but it is so small that its abuse is no more than the whispers of a mouse. The stranger crosses the room and sits in a corner vacated by alarmed sailors. The demon sits quietly by his side, held by a silver chain.

The stranger's name is Doctor Qua and the creature is his Hate Beast, whose empathic attack begins to emanate from it almost immediately.

## DOCTOR QU

Chaos 181, Balance 68, Law 120

STR 12	CON 14	SIZ 16	INT 24	POW 30
DEX 19	APP 13		HP 15	MP 30

Damage Bonus: +1D4

**Armor:** 1D6-1, patchwork leather; uses demon cloak to teleport away from danger.

**Weapon:** Demon Scimitar 96%, 1D8+1+1D4+1D10  
Dagger 80%, damage 1D4+2+1D4

**Spells:** Bonds Unbreakable (3), Demon's Ear ((1), Midnight (1), Muddle (1), Refutation (1-4), Summon Demon (1), Undo Magic (1-4), Ward (3), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3).

**Skills:** Common Tongue 80%, High Speech 40%, Mabden 25%, Melnibonéan 140%, Million Spheres 29%, Natural World 87%, Oratory 91%, Potions 136%, Scribe 140%.

**DOCTOR QUA'S GREATER DEMON SCIMITAR, Brakkn'il,** which keens and moans when out of the scabbard.

INT 8 POW 19

**Ability:** *Demon Weapon*, adds 1D10.

**DOCTOR QUA'S LESSER DEMON CLOAK, Sh'foonn.**

STR 18 CON 22 SIZ 22 INT 13 POW 12

**Abilities:** *Teleport*.

*Fog*, at 60%, creates malodorous fog-bank 22 yards high and 28 yards wide.

**THE HATE BEAST, lesser demon, humanoid, furious.**

STR 7 CON 14 SIZ 20 INT 8 POW 15

DEX 6 MOV 3 HP 19

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4.

**Abilities:** *Emanate Hatred*, at 100%, match demon's POW against victim's INT.

*Carapace*, 1D10+1D2 toad skin.

**Need:** maintain nearly inaudible tirade of perpetual abuse.

**Magic Point Cost to Summon:** 30.



THE INCOMPARABLE DOCTOR QUA

## THE BAR BRAWL

**Q**UA'S INTENTION IS to begin a terrible brawl and to observe who among the common throng distinguish themselves. At least one of the adventurers should come to the attention of the good doctor.

As the Hate Beast broadcasts, a huge, ugly sailor develops a hatred for one of the adventurers. Violence erupts when most of the Tarkeshites decide that they loathe their companions, the rest of the clientele, and the decor. The barkeep starts throwing wine pots from behind the bar, while his slave scurries into the night for help.

Have the players roll against the Hate Beast to see which adventurers fall foul of the demon's potency. Those receiving failures find hot rage welling in them, and wish to lash out at whoever comes within reach. This is a time for punch-ups and amusing but harmless violence. Adventurers who draw swords soon have them tangled in flying drapes and other bric-a-brac, or knocked away by well-swung bar stools.

The brawl breaks up when a company of soldiers arrives from a Lormyrian vessel. The captain is keen to suppress the ruckus before the Melnibonéans take a hand and he begins to lose crew. With successful Idea rolls, alert adventurers may guess that the cloaked Melnibonéan has somehow caused the fight. Once Doctor Qua has had a chance to watch the warriors in action, he slinks out into the fog to prepare a further surprise. Once he and his Hate Beast depart, no one in the bar can recall why the fight began, save the adventurers, and all feel disconcerted and foolish.

## THE VISION IN THE GLOOM

**W**HEN THE ADVENTURERS leave the bar, they encounter the doctor's second test. Out in the street, a strong wind whips up from nowhere. Those making Search rolls can literally see this wind. It is crimson, flecked with gold. Its force tugs at clothing and tosses hats from heads as it begins to twist into visible shapes. Figures appear, a huge dragon with a Melnibonéan warrior upon its back, and four cowering men folk.

The warriors beneath the dragon are strange stunted men, dressed in coarse wool and warped leather. They brandish spears with which they poke the massive beast above them, to little avail. The dragon draws breath and incinerates all save one, in a mighty, acidic blast. The adventurers feel a rush of hot air, but suffer no ill effects. The wind begins to die and the vision fades. The mist vanishes in a splash of crimson and gold, but leaves one figure behind, the primeval warrior who escaped the dragon's breath.

The man is bestial and howling, the spittle of madness and battle-lust upon his lips. He speaks in a harsh guttural language which has a vague relationship to Mabden, and those who can make Speak Mabden rolls at half-chance may converse with him. He screams and lunges at the adventurers with his spear. His name is Yahgaar.

During the fight, Doctor Qua scampers around, watching delightedly, joy shining in his eyes. He attempts to touch the



warrior to feel that he is real, and this only drives the poor creature to greater frenzy.

## YAHGAAR

Yahgaar believes that the adventurers are demons. He is both terrified and confused, and fights until knocked out or killed.

**Chaos 15, Balance 40, Law 17**

STR 16 CON 18 SIZ 7 INT 8 POW 9  
DEX 14 APP 6 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** none.

**Weapons:** Short Spear 79%, damage 1D6+1

Small Shield 76%, damage KB +1D3+db, 20 hit points

**Armor:** 1D4-1 (cap on), Skins and Hides.

**Skills:** Dodge 64%, Listen 75%, Proto-Mabden 50%, Search 55%, Track 86%.

# THE GUESTS OF DOCTOR QUA

**A**FTER THE WARRIOR is dead, unconscious, or subdued, Doctor Qua steps forward and stares at the adventurers intently, as though judging them. They might rightly blame him for the attack they have just suffered, and the earlier disruption in the bar, but Qua is not perturbed. He holds up a hand for silence.

"Cease your babbling. The things you have seen tonight were mere tests. I require warriors both brave and cunning, and you have performed adequately. Would you work for me? I offer 6000 bronzes to you each, in purest lake silver, and priceless knowledge in addition. I must have your answer first." Qua is eager for their agreement, and if pressed will increase his offer, without providing much in the way of information about the task. He disdains to discuss his work in the street. He desires that they accompany him to his tower, if only to learn more that might help them make their decision.

He explains that he cannot take the adventurers into the confines of Imrryr proper by normal means, but must use sorcery so they are not detected. When the adventurers agree to accompany him, he releases the demons he has ready.

## THE DEMON EXPRESS

**E**NORMOUS GREEN DEMONS issue forth come from a belt which Qua wears. There are as many of them as there are adventurers. Each is a big carbuncled centipede-thing, green and viscous, with a segmented torso and no legs, just spines protruding from the body. Each demon is squat and round with a massive hinged mouth. Its mouth swings open, and within the jaws the mouth and tongue transform to make a comfortable seat. Qua encourages them to take their seats quickly. Once they are within the demons, the things join tail to mouth, as though wagons in a train, and depart.

The demon express passes through the streets of Imrryr, the illegal visitors are well-hidden from the eyes of the Eagle Guard. However, riding the express presents its own hazard,

since individual demons may get frisky. Match the POW of each demon against that of its passenger. If the demon wins, it plays a prank upon the adventurer; see the Transportation Mishap Table, nearby. This prank is not fatal, as the demon fears Qua too greatly for that.

## VEELEIN, LESSER DEMON, CARRIAGE OF THE DEMON EXPRESS

STR 12 CON 17 SIZ 22 INT 7 POW 13  
DEX 14 MOV 8 HP 12 each

**Abilities:** *Lift*, at 80%, up to SIZ 24 for transportation purposes.

*Bite*, at 40% damage is 1D8.

**Dimensions**, at 10%, one other dimension where Qua normally keeps them.

*See*, at 85%.

**Need:** play prank upon passenger.

**Magic Point Cost to Summon:** 66.

## THE DIFFIDENT HOST

**T**HE DEMON EXPRESS deposits the adventurers outside a tower of odd symmetry and weird ambience. It is a serpentine, elegant construction, shimmering with pastel and delicate hue. Though a single tower, it is

## TRANSPORTATION MISHAP TABLE

Choose one from the list below, or roll 1D8.

1. The demon starts rotating at high speed. The adventurer must receive an CON x3 roll or become dizzy.
2. The demon bounces and bumps the adventurer, as if traveling over a corrugated road. The adventurer must roll CON x5 or be sick.
3. The demon belches constantly, treating the adventurer to its foul breath.
4. The demon disengages from the rest and plunges into the harbor. The adventurer is soaked. Then it dances back to the rest of the express.
5. The demon swallows the adventurer whole, but quickly coughs him or her back up. The adventurer is covered in foul-smelling muck from the demon's innards.
6. The demon disengages and strands the adventurer atop the highest spire in Imrryr. The adventurer must receive a successful Dexterity roll to clasp on to the precarious perch. The demon catches him or her if a fall begins, then rejoins the rest of the express.
7. The demon flips open when passing a group of Imperial Guards, giving them a glimpse of the human within. Then it speeds on, outrunning the guards and snickering to itself.
8. The demon disengages and takes a detour through another plane, treating the adventurers to a view of a nightmare world of strange Chaos beasts, some of whom resemble the demon. After a minute or two it returns to the Young Kingdoms plane and reattaches itself to the other demons.

somehow subtly more, as though it contained suggestions of further construction, but not the construction itself.

Doctor Qua steps before them, revealed at last. Beneath his large ragged cloak which keeps him from the prying eyes of the throng he sports a quilted outfit resembling a harlequin's, all silk and brocade. His red, yellow, and blue suit has pockets all over it, and each one bulges with a strange instrument. Besides being shorter than most Melnibonéans, his head is slightly broader, hinting at some other strain in his blood. He has silvery hair and dark eyes and a full, sensuous mouth. His features are crueler than the usual Melnibonéan cast, since his brows draw down together and a strong crease sits above his nose. The doctor is keen on all things historical, particularly that period of the Bright Empire when the Melnibonéans went abroad upon the land and destroyed or subdued the other non-human races, before the coming of humanity to the world.

Qua tells the adventurers they have the run of the tower and the grounds for a while, and may enjoy themselves. There are plenty of cooperative slaves who can bring food, suggest activities, and so on. Then the adventurers will be summoned and Qua will explain much more of what they are to do. For now, if he is to succeed in sending them on this adventure, he must work. The tower slaves will look to any desires the adventurers may have. There is only one room forbidden them and that is the room in which Qua works.

## THE TOWER OF DOCTOR QU

SOME FEATURES OF THE tower and grounds are offered below. A description of the closed chamber is given under the heading Tales of the Time Winds.

### THE STABLES AND MEADOW

The horses here are the finest Melnibonéan steeds. There are also two demon steeds. These two appear normal except for one chaotic feature each. The first has a bunched pair of wings upon its back which allow it to lift itself and one rider not above size 13. The second has hooves which make a great thunderous noise when it runs, making it a dauntingly effective warhorse. Adventurers must Fast Talk the stable slaves to permit them to ride these particular mounts.

Surrounding the tower is a beautiful emerald green meadow. The meadow is long and broad, too big to be believably within Imrryr, partly within another plane at the gamemaster's discretion, bounded by careful walls. Chaos blooms abound, as do long stretches of glorious lawn where the adventurers might ride or frolic as they will.

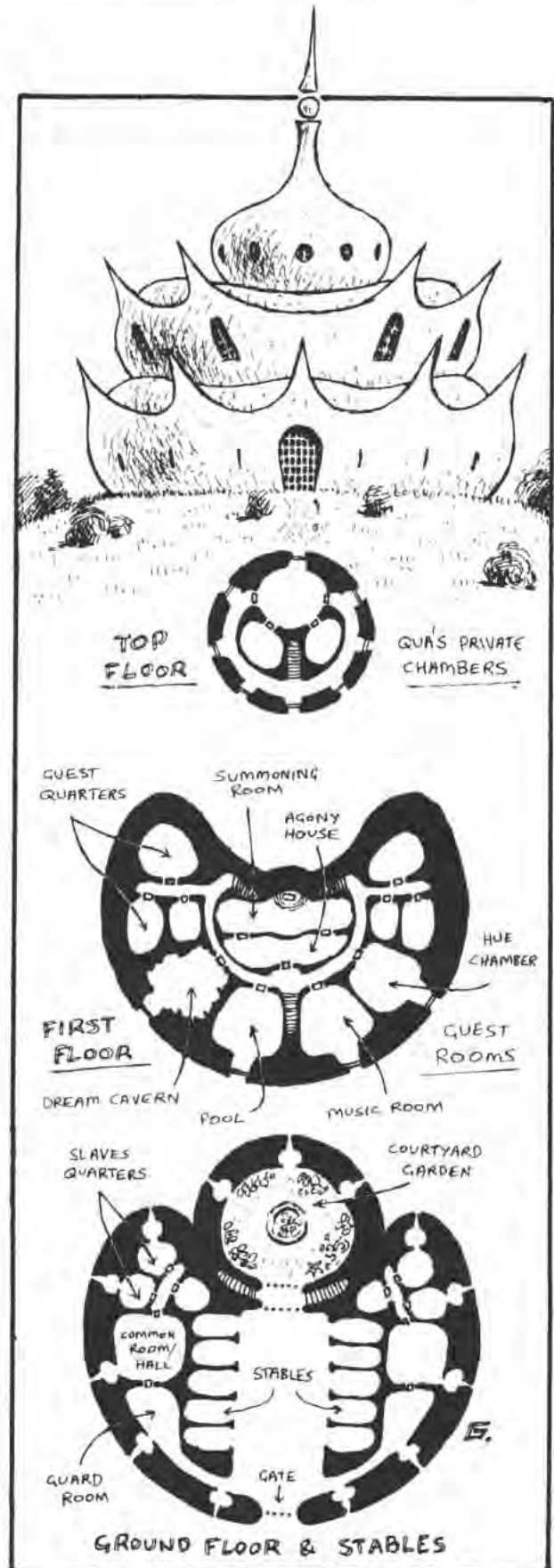
### THE GUEST ROOMS

These are massive and beautiful areas in which guests may amuse themselves. All are built in rounded patterns, yet none are truly circular. All as well contain a noticeable distortion, as though the rooms slanted toward some destination like rounded tunnels into infinity.

These are the rooms of the Guest Chambers:

**MUSIC ROOM:** a selection of outré instruments and sheet music are kept here, including the strange Voorkuhrian Triple Horn and the Concerto for Twenty Fingers written for it.

**HUE CHAMBER:** a place of many strange and startling color changes, where guests may be alternately soothed, stimulated, or enraged.



DOCTOR QU'S TOWER

**DREAM CAVERN:** this room, shaped like a natural cavern, contains many dreams on tap. People only have to inhale the drug burning in a brazier in the center of the room to find themselves dreaming all kinds of strange and wondrous things. The dreams may be frightening, comforting, stimulating, or unfathomable.

**THE AGONY HOUSE:** this room is locked and guarded by three husky slaves and a demon door named Sneakbane. Sneakbane is a vociferous demon, and delights in heaping abuse upon any who would thwart his charge of guarding his master's privacy. He has a fine line in invective, "Try not your stumbling fingers on me, oaf of the lowest, cankerous, dung-besmirched kind." He is capable of backing up his words with an iron-tipped bite. The door is of 20-point wood and iron, plus Sneakbane's 2D10 Carapace defense.

Currently Qua is working in here, as it leads to his Summoning Chamber. He takes a dim view of any adventurers who wander in and break his concentration.

**SNEAKBANE, GREATER DEMON,  
BOUND INTO DOOR**

STR 20 CON 100 SIZ 20 INT 15 POW 25  
DEX 5 MOV 0 HP 35

**Abilities:** *Bite*, at 200%, damage is 4D10.

*See.*

*Carapace* 2D10.

**Need:** periodically swings open and slams shut, waking sleepers and knocking small objects off shelves.

**Skill:** Oratory (Abuse) 50%.

**Magic Point Cost to Summon:** 71.

**QUA'S PRIVATE QUARTERS**

Qua did not forbid the adventurers to enter his private rooms, and the slaves do not prevent them from doing so. These quarters are surprisingly sparse. They resemble more the cell of a monk of Donblas than the chambers of a Melnibonéan scholar. Books take the place of luxury furnishings. There are

many arcane volumes of Bright Empire history, most in Melnibonéan, though some are in an unreadable language. One is in a language similar to Melnibonéan, and is called *A History of the War Against the Nhadrach* by Joyn Alden Yoav. It relates the history of a Melnibonéan-like race called the Vadhagh.

A carved mahogany desk is scattered with the detritus of Qua's most recent work. He is in the process of illuminating a verse with gold leaf and crimson ink. The borders have a draconic motif. The title of the piece is "The Rhyme of K'lac Asdarc."

The library can be used to learn more about Asdarc. Successful rolls in both Search and Melnibonéan discover that Asdarc was one of the great sorcerers who fought against the forces of the Balance in the Melnibonéan Civil War.

## THE FATEFUL SUMMONS

**S**LAVERS DRAW BATHS for the adventurers, filled with rich scented bath oils and exotic fragrances. New clothes are provided for each adventurer, and the slaves insist with dull repetition that everyone dons this garb. The clothes resemble a uniform, consisting of black shirts and breeches with fine silver trim, black leather knee boots and a quilted silver doublet which acts as leather armor. Lastly there is a black headband with silver runes. Adventurers proficient in Melnibonéan translate them as *The Dragon Troops of K'lac Asdarc*.

Once dressed, the adventurers are taken to the Agony House. The door stands open. Sneakbane is silent.

## THE AGONY HOUSE

Here Qua conducts what a human would consider his most dubious experiments. The walls are covered in numberless masks depicting various contortions and agonies, some in the very act of being prodded, pulled, or skewered. Yet the workmanship and the aesthetic of the masks are so exquisite that they almost become attractive. The floor is carpeted in rich black fur.

## THE SUMMONING CHAMBER

Beyond the Agony House is Qua's private Summoning Chamber. This stone chamber, with its graven floor of symbols and signs, is lowering and foreboding. At the far wall of the chamber stands a black stone pedestal. Upon this rests a few pieces of shattered glass. Though broken, the pieces are plainly of superior workmanship. The curves are delicate, and the fine etchings upon the surface are subtle and beautiful. Each who handles a shard needs a successful Dexterity roll, or receives hand cuts for 1D3 damage. Witch Sight toward the glass shows the pieces to have a strong aura of Chaos, so bright as to almost dazzle the viewer.

## TALES OF THE TIME WINDS

**Q**UA MEETS THE adventurers with an expansive smile, out of character for the taciturn Melnibonéan who had previously shown emotion only during the appearance of the primitive warrior.

Qua has changed to an outfit of silken yellow and a close-fitting cap of red. His slippers are also red and silken. He

### THE RHYME OF K'LAC ASDARC

ANCIENT HE WAS,  
SORROWFUL IN WISDOM,  
TERRIBLE IN POWER,  
ELEGANT IN PAIN,  
EMBRACER OF ENTROPY,  
DESIRER OF DISORDER,  
COURTIER OF CHAOS,  
HIS TROOPS AND BEASTS,  
HIS SWORD AND MIND,  
HIS ESSENCE:  
ALL TO CHAOS, THE BALANCE DEFIED!



wears a small demon upon the bridge of his nose. The tiny demon is golden and shimmering. It sits with its legs astride the Melnibonéan's nose. At the end of each leg descends a circle filled with a clear but slightly distorting lens. The demon allows Qua to see into certain Chaos planes to better aid his summonings.

Qua leads his guests to the pedestal and the glass. "Let me elucidate what you witnessed earlier," he says. "It will help you understand the nature of the journey you are to undertake for me."

Qua explains that the figures the adventurers saw fighting in the street, the men and the dragon, were as dreams, images conjured up from a dim and all but forgotten past. These dreams can be experienced by the adventurers themselves. They need only imbibe a certain consciousness-altering substance to know of some of the history of the race of Melniboné. But Qua has gone one step further. He has combined this drug with a summoning, a demon he calls the Time Wind. This creature may take passengers through the planes, and they will experience the past or the future as though they were there.

Qua now wishes to undertake an experiment. He wants the adventurers to assume the mantle of Melnibonéans, something they can easily do in the dream state, and experience the past for 24 hours. At the end of this time, he is going to make them real. Their Melnibonéan guises will fall from them and they can influence the past. Up until then they will be as actors in a drama. At that moment they will be the playwrights themselves. To test whether they may have influence on the past they are to save the glass Qua has before them. This piece, the Suffer Glass, belonged to the collection of Prince Dusac of Castle Crow, during the Melnibonéan Civil War. It was broken during an attack on the castle by the forces of the Balance. The adventurers have merely to secrete it to where it cannot be damaged. The pieces in Qua's possession will reconstruct into the whole. The experiment will be proved a success and the adventurers will have earned their fee. It stands at 6,000 bronzes apiece, plus a further 5,000 for a successful mission.

## SHOULD SOME REFUSE

**I**F THE ADVENTURERS as a whole refuse the journey, the gamemaster could infuse the air of the room with the dream-drug, and send off everyone anyway.

If it is merely a matter of money, Qua will increase their fees, but above 10,000 bronzes each takes profound insult at such manipulation, and resolves to have his slaves ambush them after their return to the present.

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

**Q**UA IS WILLING TO answer questions about the historical period into which the adventurers will go. Unhappily, even in the knowledge of

## IDENTICAL ENCHANTED BROADSWORDS

**T**HE NAMES OF the swords are Vengeance, Venom, Venture, Verity, Vermin, Verve, Vexed, Vicious, Vigor, Villain, etc., as many as are needed. In the Civil War, most of the ordinary soldiers had little or no magic; those Chaotics of low Power and considerable wealth had demon weapons re-bound to them, or else tried to obtain enchanted weapons (as indeed did those of the Balance).

Each sword looks rather plain, except for the Sign of Chaos on the pommel. In combat, add 1D8 points of damage to its damage: thus such a blade does 1D8+1 ordinary damage, plus wielder's damage bonus, plus another 1D8 damage from the enchantment. Each has 50 hit points, and the minimum STR/DEX for the weapon is 6/6. The scabbards for the blades are each decorated with dragons subtly embossed into the leather.

Melnibonéan scholars there are gaps, one of the reasons for the adventurers' current journey. The gamemaster can refer to the History section of the *Melniboné* chapter under the sub-heading 'The Return of Chaos,' for a brief description of the conflict between Melnibonéans loyal to the Balance and those loyal to Chaos.

The uniform the adventurers wear is that of a group of elite mercenaries. This group was near the Battle of Castle Crow, but not present at it. Under this guise they will be welcomed at Castle Crow by Prince Dusac.

Finally Qua assures them except for the brief moments in which they will become themselves they cannot be permanently harmed. If they are killed they will be shocked out of their reverie but merely be back with Qua awaiting the return of the rest of the party.

Qua omits any mention of the nature of the Suffer Glass. If asked, he says that it is a minor but aesthetic piece, and should serve well as a test of the experiment's success. Insight reveals that Qua obviously knows the artifact to be more important than he indicates.

## EQUIPMENT

Qua gives each person a small crystal coin inscribed with the image of a dragon. These pieces further identify the bearer as a soldier in the army of the sorcerer Asdarc. Qua considers his words for a moment: "When you must sing, also concentrate through these disks, and your music will be augmented." That is all he will say on the subject.

Perhaps to divert the adventurers, he also offers the adventurers one enchanted broadsword apiece. He knows it would be suspicious if they arrived with no magic. Qua frowns at grasping adventurers who try to wheedle more out of him, and should an adventurer already possess a demon weapon, the offer is not made at all. "When you are done," he snaps, "I shall want them back."

## RIDING THE TIME WINDS

**Q**UA PASSES A GOLDEN dragon goblet among the adventurers. This is the dream-inducing drug needed for the adventurers to mentally integrate with their new surroundings. The liquid is blue and bitter, smelling vaguely of flowers and tasting like almonds. After each adventurer has taken a long sip, Qua pours the dregs from the goblet into an elegant eyedropper. With this he places a droplet into each eye of all of the adventurers. If some resist he claims it is the best way that he can keep a check to make certain they are safe. The drops allow him to see through the adventurers' eyes. If he needs to make them real and to bring them back quicker, he can summon the appropriate demon.

Qua's slaves help him into a ceremonial robe of Arioch, all black with golden thread. He begins to intone the summoning. Soon the room grows dark and strange breezes start from nowhere. The crimson and gold wind of time arrives.

The wind envelops the adventurers. Qua remains in the center of the vortex, gesticulating and howling wild syllables. Within the storm the adventurers' vision blurs. All around becomes a chaos of whirling scenes and peoples. The colors of red and gold dominate everything, painting all the giddy scenes with their own hue until the adventurers become sick at the very sight of the colors. The pain of the voyage is intense. Adventurers must succeed in a CON x3 or pass out. At last the whirring whistling tornado of time sets the adventurers down in a new land, and as new people.

### BEING MELNIBONÉAN

**U**NDER THE DRUG'S influence, the adventurers become Melnibonéan for the duration of their dream. Potion and sorcery combine to make them experience the past as though they are literally there. Assuming Melnibonéan form entails considerable physiological and psychological changes. The adventurers retain their original personalities and general physiques, but their outlooks become more subtle, and more dark. In this state, they cannot alter history, nor can they actually die. However, they can suffer psychological effects at the end of their sojourn as Melnibonéans. These are dealt with under Aftermath and Consequences, below.

#### APPEARANCE

All the adventurers now have the long, narrow skulls of the Melnibonéan. Their hair is fine and silky, though retains its original color. The eyes also stay the same color, but become almond-shaped and knowing. The skin is pale and soft, and the body tall and lean. The adventurers still recognize each other, but newcomers would be hard-pressed to know they were anything but Melnibonéans.

#### OUTLOOK

The adventurers' new mind-set is more like a Melnibonéan. They find new interest in matters metaphysical and philosophic and less recourse to what might otherwise be called "sentiment." This includes care for others, concern over people's well-being, and affection for one person or another. Likewise they find cruelty acceptable if it has style and sophistication about it.

#### SKILLS

Acclimatization to the new body takes 1D3 hours. During this time, all physical skills (such as Jump, Attack, Dodge, and the like) are at half-chance. The adventurers' statistics remain the same, although their SIZ is spread over a taller, thinner frame.

They speak Melnibonéan as though it were their native tongue. The subtleties of High Speech are beyond them unless they are already able to speak that language. All conversations take place in ordinary Melnibonéan, since the higher tongue is reserved for ceremony and sorcery.

Adventurers experience the subtle changes of Melnibonéan physiognomy through improved eyesight and hearing. This comes from the innate sensitivity of the Melnibonéan race. Their peculiar eyes offer a wider spectrum of colors and richer more vibrant hues. Everything is brighter and more vivid. Hearing too is more sensitive. Adventurers may add 15% to Search and Listen for their duration as Melnibonéans, to better approximate these differences. They also gain the Witch Sight, as per the spell, but as a skill at POW x3% each. Finally, each gains the Million Spheres skill at a percentage of half that of Witch Sight (round fractions up).

All of these increases in skill disappear when the adventurers return to themselves.

#### DEATH AND INJURY

While in the dream-state the adventurers cannot truly die. However death, and even serious injury, do have consequences. Dying while under the time-drug at once brings the adventurer back to the present time in his or her own body. The adventurer is comatose and awakes only by Qua's sorcery or by a successful Physik roll.

Receiving a major wound while under the time-drug may bring about *phantom injury*. Adventurers failing an Idea roll believe that they still have the injury after returning to their own body. The adventurer acts at all times as though the physical damage were real. Thus an adventurer who lost an eye can no longer see through that eye. The adventurer may be convinced that the wound is non-existent, but only through a dramatic demonstration (such as dangling them off a cliff by a limb they believe severed), or by lengthy and successful Oratory.

#### BEING NORMAL

Once the dream-state is no longer in effect, the adventurers are back to being their true selves. While dreaming they are Melnibonéans the adventurer's true forms waft in a Chaos-void, and only reunited with their consciousness at the command of Qua. Should an adventurer become permanently separated from his true inner self by madness or dire torture, he is lost forever, a sad Chaos-driven thing who may from time to time haunt the dreams of his less vulnerable companions.



## THE FLIGHT ON THE PLAINS

**T**HE ADVENTURERS ARRIVE upon a high ridge overlooking wind-swept moors and downs. The world they look upon seems newer than their own, brighter, sweeter, and more vivid. A successful Navigation roll by someone who knows the geography of Melniboné identifies the place as the Isolated Fells. Perhaps a mile across the Meadows of Lassitude to the southwest stands a massive castle, whose alien and inhuman architecture make it resemble a giant black bird squatted upon the plain. Beyond the castle rises the ragged line of the Encircling Hills.

A Search detects a cloud of dust moving beyond the heat-haze to the north. This cloud surrounds an army, at this point merely a gathering of specks, but obviously a sizable force. A second Search roll spies nine horsemen in white and green riding hard across the plain for the castle.

Closer at hand, a Listen detects voices calling. A mounted group of Melnibonéan warriors is searching the foot of the ridge. The detachment is twenty strong. They wear light armor, of feathers and cloth, and a mixture of red and blue clothing. They carry bows and swords. They are a group of scouts of the Army of the Balance, and the adventurers are their Chaos prey.

The adventurers must all succeed in Hide rolls, or else be spotted. If this happens, the scouts gesticulate and draw weapons, and proceed up the ridge. Six remain mounted, in case the adventurers attempt escape. The ridge is the high ground, and the attackers face that disadvantage, but they are fine archers, and half of the remainder strive to pin down their quarry while the other seven attempt to outflank them. The adventurers must hope to whittle down their numbers and then engage them hand-to-hand, or else flee along the top of the ridge.

A few thousand yards south a path leads down to the plains. With speed and stealth the adventurers may make this and leave the Melnibonéans struggling up the ridge after them, but even so the small mounted reserve force pursue them across the plains. Since the adventurers are on foot, they must engage the horseman well before the walls of Castle Crow. On the plains are only short grasses and small hillocks, nary a place to hide or ambush.

Adventurers who attempt to parley are taken prisoner. The commander of the scouts takes them north to meet the main force, for questioning under torture. The gamemaster may choose to have the adventurers rescued by a group of Chaos outriders from Castle Crow before this happens.

For ordinary warriors on both sides, see the 'Melnibonéan Digest.'

## THE CASTLE OF THE CROW

**T**HE HULKING fortifications are black as coal. Crenelated outer walls surround a massive central tower with two great battlements which curve east and west, giving the appearance of huge wings. The gate is a twin-structure, made entirely of bronze. Pennants

flying from the top of the tower depict the device of Prince Dusac, a gaunt ebon crow upon a field of crimsons, oranges and greens. The upper fluting of the tower's highest minaret is also of bronze, giving the appearance of a beak. For all its black stone and grim aspect, the fortification retains the artistry and odd aesthetics of the Melnibonéan culture.

The gates are opened for the adventurers. In the courtyard open, the scene is part carnival, part siege. Soldiers move to and fro preparing for the coming combat, but there are also jugglers, conjurers, fire-breathers, and even a strange man in odd-colored clothing walking on stilts and screaming philosophy.

The Captain of the Castle Garrison strides over to the adventurers, followed by lieutenants and sycophants. He is a tall Melnibonéan, wearing a dust colored outfit and heavy black cape. He is weary and brusque. He announces himself as Karndell, loyal servant of Arioch and Prince Dusac, and states his rank. "You were not expected for a week," he says, looking pointedly at the insignia the adventurers wear. If they performed valorously against the Army of the Balance in sight of the castle the Captain is less wary, although still suspicious.

Intelligent remarks impress Karndell as much as do the identifying dragon crystals each of the adventurers were given. Fast Talk rolls reinforce the story. When he is satisfied, he bustles them across the courtyard and into the castle proper. As the adventurers pass by the stables, Search rolls note that the ostlers are saddling a dozen black horses for immediate travel. A group men and women in soft, expensive clothing wait impatiently.

## THE BELEAGUERED PRINCE

**T**HE ADVENTURERS CATCH only a fleeting glimpse of the interior of the castle as Karndell hurries them through. Soldiers move about briskly making preparations for war. Staircases from the upper level of the keep are jammed with servants carrying furniture downstairs. The walls are beautifully adorned, and the flagstones are intricate mosaics of vast design, but the frenetic activity obscures any artistic appreciation.

The adventurers are taken to the Great Hall, in the main tower. This hall is cold and bare, holding only tokens of war in carved niches around the wall. Prince Dusac has foregone the niceties of decoration in this room and uses its sparseness to aid his concentration on things martial. One niche is covered by a tapestry which depicts scenes of abundance and desolation intermingled in one surreal landscape, and the prince stands before it in silent contemplation.

Dusac is a tall Melnibonéan with raven hair and eyes at once cloudy and sharp. His features are noble, but his body is that of a warrior, lean and wiry. He wears a battered black leather coat over embroidered clothes of green and white. He wears no insignia of his high office save an exquisitely worked emerald and silver ring upon the fourth finger of his left hand.

### PRINCE DUSAC, PRINCE OF CROWS

Chaos 140, Balance 88, Law 80

STR 18 CON 17 SIZ 17 INT 23 POW 24

DEX 16 APP 16 HP 17

Damage Bonus: +1D6.

Armor: 1D10+6 (helm on), Melnibonéan Plate

Weapons: Demon Spear 214%, damage 1D10+1+1D6+3D10

—continued next page



## PRINCE DUSAC, CONTINUED

**Spells:** Hell's Armor (1-4), Hell's Razor (1-4), Hell's Sharp Flame (1-4), Horns of Hionhurn (1-3), Invoke Arioeh of the Seven Darks (24%), Plasticity of Balo (1-3), Refutation (1-4), Sinew of Mabelode (1-3), Soul of Chardros (1-3), Summon Demon (1), Suppleness of Xiombarg (1-3), Undo Magic (1-4), Ward (3), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3).

**Skills:** Call Raven 115%, Dodge 168%, High Speech 75%, Melnibonéan 125%, Million Spheres 51%, Oratory 115%, Ride 184%, Tactics 123%, Throw 107%.

### HEARTPIERCER, greater demon, bound into spear

STR 8 CON 120 SIZ 2 INT 8 POW 24  
DEX 8 MOV 0 HP 61

**Ability:** *Demon Weapon*, adds 3D10 to Dusac's spear damage.

**Need:** kill one person daily.

## THE PRINCE'S WELCOME

THE CAPTAIN ANNOUNCES the adventurers as the Dragon Warriors of Asdarc. The prince breaks into a rare smile and comes forth to greet the adventurers. "Do you know that you have delivered us from our enemies? My thanks and the blessings of Arioeh upon thee. At present we are caught between two forces. You are our timely deliverers."

The army which the adventurers saw to the north is the Army of the Balance, heading toward the castle on their sweep

across the plains of Melniboné. The riders which the adventurers saw race into the castle have reported that a sister force is marching from the south, the Army of the Sorcerer Opyine Manaak, who comes with five hundred men and control of wind elementals. The prince holds over a thousand warriors in Castle Crow, and the fortress is well constructed. He can possibly defeat one army, but not both.

Now, with the elite Dragon Warriors here, the Army of the Wind can be taken on and destroyed or depleted before they reach the castle. The prince has assembled a party of diplomats to go forth and parley with the Army of the Balance. This will gain the time the adventurers need to meet the Army of the Wind head on. "I will give you the men you will need. The rest is up to you." Regardless of how many men the adventurers ask for, the prince merely laughs. They only need four others, and these await them in the courtyard. "I'm sure," says the prince, "your reputation does you justice."

The party have no choice in this matter. They have identified themselves as the Dragon Troops of Asdarc, and as those warriors they must now serve the prince. He wishes them good luck, and they are escorted out. Kamdell takes them back to the courtyard.

Four Melnibonéans wait for the adventurers. These men are dressed alike, in green and red uniforms and conical helms. They greet the adventurers with deference. They have black horses for the adventurers, as well as mounts for themselves.

These are the same steeds the adventurers saw being saddled earlier. "Here are your men," the Captain indicates. "You will find the Army of the Wind approaching from the south. Arioeh rides with you."

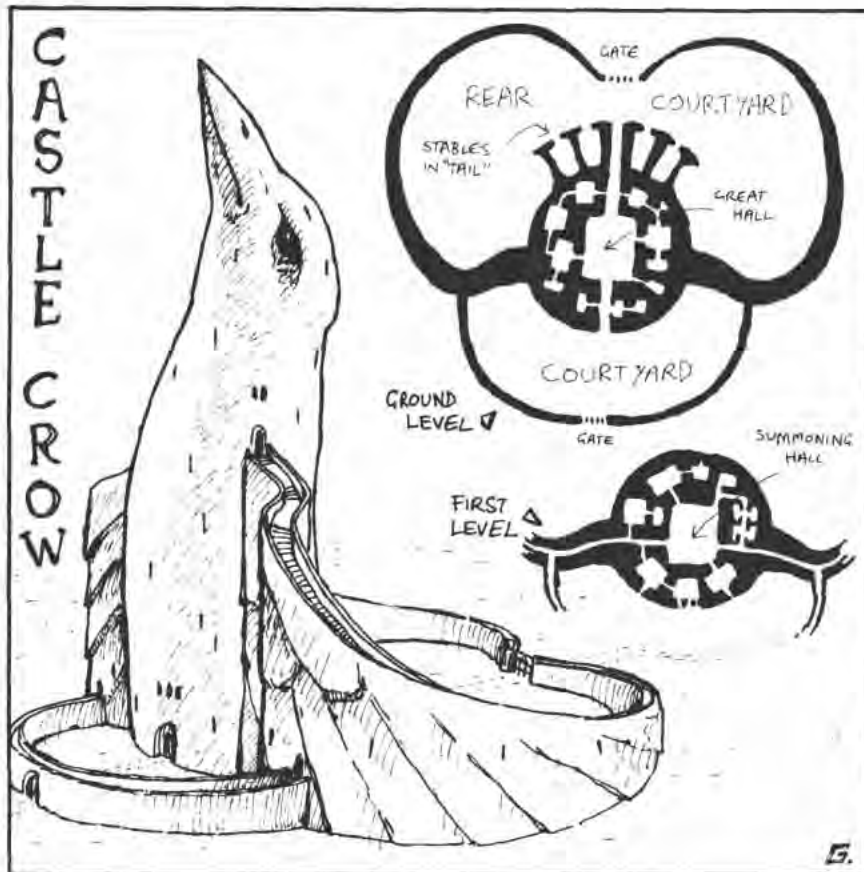
## THE DIPLOMATS

AS THE ADVENTURERS prepare to leave, the seven well-dressed men and women accost Kamdell. They are led by Shapin Jadlor, a brooding Melnibonéan with a slight limp and a cruel twist to his mouth.

"And where are our horses, Captain? Or are we to delay the Balance by making it wait while we walk across the plains?"

The Captain bows to Jadlor. "Lord Jadlor, your mounts will be ready shortly." Jadlor steps up to the adventurers and makes a sarcastic remark about the wonders of Asdarc's men, and how truly wonderful they will need to be to turn back an army of five hundred. It is as though he is baiting the adventurers, but the Captain intervenes. "The prince has sent these men on a mission of great urgency and danger, my Lord, and they may not be delayed." The sardonic Jadlor turns on his heel and leads away his group.

An ostler gives each of the adventurers' horses a black lump of sugar. The horses chew them gladly, but



CASTLE CROW SCHEMATIC

soon after begin to shiver and twitch. The gates are then opened, and the adventurers are free to ride. The horses burst forwards with tremendous speed, and Ride rolls are needed to cling on.

## THE JOURNEY SOUTH

**T**HE ADVENTURERS RIDE south. As they gallop, the horses are wide-eyed and foaming. Their muscles begin to tighten, and fat can literally be seen dissolving from their flanks. The drug they were given has lent them incredible endurance, but the animals' metabolism is visibly consuming the animals themselves to sustain their pace. Even a successful Potion roll does not identify the drug involved.

The men leading the adventurers are the Keepers of the Dragon Caves, and that is their destination. They presume the adventurers know this, and so offer no information unless specifically asked. If the adventurers are clumsy in questioning them, their leader, Dvyim Slvac, becomes suspicious. He tries to get the adventurers to tell him precisely how much they know about the dragon-kind. If he feels they are not what they profess, he presumes they are spies sent from the Army of the Balance. If this is the case he calls their bluff and still takes them to the Dragon Caves in the knowledge the dragons will soon devour them should they be impostors.

First their guides take them across the lush Meadows of Lassitude, then over the steep and arid Encircling Hills, where dust and dryness invades their throats as the horses clamber up steep slopes. Beyond the hills lies the Plain of Imrryr. Imrryr herself is not yet built. Instead, the jade palaces of H'hui'shan yet stand, but perhaps not for long. A great thunderous cloud of shimmering sorcery hovers over the city, and dark forms, winged and terrible, crowd the skies overhead.

The riders cross the Plain of Imrryr and reach the rocky hills beyond H'hui'shan. By now the horses are but living skeletons. Call for Luck rolls. Those who receive failures have their galloping horses die underneath them. Their hearts burst, and each luckless adventurer is thrown off, suffering 1D6 damage unless a Jump roll is successfully made.

Dvyim reins in, and suggests everyone does likewise. This is not easy, and Ride rolls are needed to stop the frantic beasts. Adventurers who remember their humanity may wish to kill the pain-wracked horses. The other Melnibonéans are confused by the purpose of such a merciful act. Why would anyone pause do such a thing? To them it is impossible to understand. Can the adventurers supply some reason that their guides accept?

Dark paths honeycomb the hillside, many leading into deep caverns below the foothills. Dvyim takes the adventurers underground. Before he does, he stops and warns them. "All dragons have been pressed into the attack upon H'hui'shan, save these. This group is ancient, and bad tempered. I fear not many will be awake, and fewer helpful."



## THE DRAGONS

**T**HE DRAGONS OF Melniboné are more than mere beasts. They are cunning and subtle, brutal and wise. The pacts which the Melnibonéans have forged with them in ages past have resulted in their being as close as kin to the pre-human folk. Some facts of dragon life will aid gamemasters in running this section of the scenario. The adventurers learn them as they begin to experience the delights of draconic company.

### NOMENCLATURE

**D**RAGONS MALES ARE drakes, dragon females are jills. Each dragon has a True Name which can be learned during bonding. Once learned, preface the name with Lord or Lady, to ensure the dragon does not take offence. On a successful roll the adventurer also learns his or her own name, by which the dragons thereafter know them. By announcing themselves as such, they further establish rapport with the dragon. These are usually diminutives or pet names, and wildly inappropriate (Elric's is Little Cat!). Gamemasters must invent names for the adventurers.

### PHYSIOLOGY

**D**RAGONS ARE GRAY-GREEN, red-green, and other shades within that spectrum. Their shading is subtle, shimmering and scintillating. Dragons expend enormous energy in flying and must sleep one hundred years for every day that they are active. Dragons are massive, yet not cumbersome in their gait.

Half way along the underside of the neck is a place where the dragon's scales are soft. The stomach leather is also softer than the rest. Only Melnibonéans skilled in dragon lore know of these weaknesses. The rest of the body is heavily scaled. Sharp ridges lie along neck and tail, and these extend when the dragon is angry or under attack. They flatten when the beast is relaxed. This can be a clue as to how a dragon is relating to an adventurer. (Being devoured is another, less subtle clue). Dragons have a natural ridge above where their wings join the shoulders. It is here that the Dragon Rider sits, usually on a saddle, though some Dragon Princes have been known to ride bareback.

Dragons spit fiery venom from their mouths. This spittle is drawn from hidden sacs within its neck. When angry, a dragon's breath is venomous and smoky.

### COMMUNICATION WITH DRAGONS

**I**T IS SAID THAT SOME dragons speak, but this is so rare as to be almost unheard of. Dragon and rider converse in more subtle ways. This takes the form of Dragon Song, a melding of song, speech, and gesture known to the Melnibonéan Dragon Princes, and to few others. The speech component is close to High Speech, but there are many other parts of the communication.

Each song has its own, self explanatory title. Instances include Song of Approach, Song of Command, and Song of I-Would-Appreciate-Your-Continuing-Concern-In-This-Matter. These are known also as Dragon Lays, though that term is sometimes reserved for the formal recountings of dragon deeds, done both to praise and to relay these marvels. Adventurers wishing to communicate with dragons must be Melnibonéan (or pseudo-Melnibonéan, for the purposes of this scenario) and receive an Oratory roll at half-chance or less. The Oratory roll can be at full chance if the adventurer has an Art or Craft which involves music, such as singing or playing. If the roll succeeds, the dragon may be spoken to (though it will not answer). It will obey, provided its name is recognized and it has accepted the person as a rider.

## THE DRAGON CAVES

**D**VYIM SLVAC GUIDES the adventurers into the caverns. Great vaulting ceilings created by eons of erosion soar overhead. A slim path leads through a forest of stalagmites, winding deep into the rock. From all corners is the pungent lizard-and-sulphur smell of dragon.

Higher up, the path begins to wind into the very mountain itself. Caverns mark the surface of the cave wall, dark openings large enough to fit three mammoths. From within each comes a soft rumble of beast breath. Along the path is an ornate rack holding dragon goads and horns. "Choose your beasts," Dvyim advises. "Arioch grant that enough of them are awake."

The adventurers must ascend and go among the caverns. Most of the dragons within are not awake, but are instead rolled into a scaled hump, breathing rhythmically. If a dragon is awake it sits forward, head near the opening of its cavern. Its eyes are closed until an adventurer draws near, then the slits widen as the shrewd inhuman gaze meets that of its prey or bondsman. There is an alert dragon for each adventurer, though some may need Search and Luck rolls to find them. Having found or chosen a dragon, each adventurer must contemplate the great beast and attempt to learn its True Name.

Using the crystal dragon disk supplied by Doctor Qua aids the adventurer's Song of Approach and helps him or her focus on the dragon's name. Any skill roll attempted has its chance for success doubled while the adventurer focuses through the disk. An adventurer has ten rounds.

If the adventurer fumbles around, or if he or she is unsuccessful in communicating, at the end of the eighth round the dragon attempts devouring the adventurer with a single massive bite, swallowing him or her whole. A successful Dodge or Jump roll avoids this fate. The dragon does not pursue the rejected adventurer beyond its own cavern. The adventurer is free to try again, with another dragon.

When the adventurer is singing, the words seem to well up from somewhere else once he or she has, falteringly, begun.

## BONDING

**B**BONDING BEGINS TO take place when the Dragon Songs have been successfully sung, and completes once the dragon and rider are aloft. This leads to the melding of minds that was the Melnibonéans' first and deepest sorcery. Once a dragon has accepted a person as 'bondfriend' the dragon and the rider are then as one. Emotions that the dragon feels are shared by the rider. The rider's emotions (such as fear, uncertainty, remorse) are probably overwhelmed by the dragon's. This is reflected by a POW:POW struggle on the resistance table, the winner dictating the emotion. Few are the riders who influence the thoughts of dragons.

Further, the rider and dragon have become one on a deeper, more esoteric level. Their thought-processes become mystically intertwined. The rider begins to mouth the appropriate songs and words without recourse to further effort. The dragon and the rider begin to share awareness equally. The dragon embraces the human spirit as surely as the rider embraces the draconic. This is a feeling which scorches away the human perceptions, as events and people are seen from the perspective of an alien consciousness, thousands of years old. Nonetheless, the intentions of the rider survive, and missions can be accomplished.

Those who bond have each a sensation of melting confidence, and the eyes of the dragon seem suddenly to swell and swallow. Then comes a sense of determination and a haunting memory of something very sly and very old, yet not lacking in affection. Now the adventurer knows the dragon's name as though from childhood. Trust is absolute, and the bond's understand of the dragon's will and physical capacity is intimate, as is that which the adventurers have now revealed to their dragons. The reptilian odor of the caves is sweet, invigorating, and friendly.

There are six dragons awake. Adventurers who do not have dragons may accompany Dvyim Slvac on horseback across the plains and be ready to engage the army on the ground if things should go awry. Alternately gamemasters may add further dragons to include all members of the party, though finding too many dragons awake is unlikely.

### LORD DEEPCOUGE

A massive old dragon with a withered right eye. He is recalcitrant sometimes, but a deadly foe. Lord Deepcounge is slow to turn, because of his size and age. He is proud, and tries throws off anyone who uses the goad on him. If that happens, the rider requires a STR x5 roll to remain in the saddle, and would be wise not to goad the Lord again.

STR 86 CON 102 SIZ 100 INT 30 POW 24  
DEX 9 MOV fly 14 HP 101

Damage Bonus: +11D8.

Armor: 25-pt scales.

Weapons: Bite 90%, damage 3D8.

Claw 90%, damage 1D6 +db.

Combustible Venom 90%, damage 1D6+4 per round to each target within an area of 102 yards.

Skills: Contemplate Fate 100%, Ponder Dreams 100%, Remember 100%, Search 45%.



## LADY SCARSNOUT

This dragon has a scar under her chin. Patient and noble, Lady Scarsnout does not take wild risks, and can be stubborn at times. In later years she accompanies Elric backward in time to this same period, as recorded in the novel *The Revenge of the Rose*.

STR 61 CON 60 SIZ 64 INT 19 POW 17  
DEX 13 MOV fly 14 HP 62

**Damage Bonus:** +7D8.

**Armor:** 20-pt scales.

**Weapons:** Bite 40%, damage 3D8.

Claw 60%, damage 1D6 +db.

Combustible Venom 75%, damage 1D6+4 per round to each target within an area of 60 yards.

**Skills:** Remember 75%, Search 90%, Sing 80%.

## LADY SWIFTTAIL

This active dragon is keen, once awake, to be in the air and enjoying the sensation of freedom. She prefers to remain aloft in battle and rely on her venom, and she uses her vast wings to fan the flames. The rider needs a successful POW:POW roll to force her into melee.

STR 59 CON 62 SIZ 60 INT 17 POW 17  
DEX 15 MOV fly 14 HP 61

**Damage Bonus:** +6D8.

**Armor:** 20-pt scales.

**Weapons:** Bite 25%, damage 3D8.

Claw 50%, damage 1D6 +db.

Combustible Venom 70%, damage 1D6+4 per round to each target within an area of 62 yards.

**Skills:** Graceful Flight 150%, Search 85%.

## LORD TOEGRIP

A young dragon, quick and playful. He delights in swooping on foes and carrying them away, to be dropped from a great height. He performs this trick at least once during any combat. Unless lashed on, Lord Toegrip's rider must make Dexterity rolls to stay in the saddle during some of the dragon's more acrobatic feats.

STR 53 CON 50 SIZ 51 INT 14 POW 14  
DEX 16 MOV fly 14 HP 51

**Damage Bonus:** +5D8.

**Armor:** 15-pt scales.

**Weapons:** Bite 35%, damage 3D8.

Claw 50%, damage 1D6 +db.

Talon Snatch 92%, seizes foe and drops during next round for 10D6 falling damage.

Combustible Venom 55%, damage 1D6+4 per round to each target within an area of 50 yards.

**Skills:** Search 70%.

## LADY ROSESCALE

A deeply philosophical dragon and also a beautiful one, with scales a soft shimmering pink over deep incarnadine. Lady Rosescape has little interest in combat. The rider must succeed in POW:POW to remind her of the task at hand.

STR 57 CON 55 SIZ 57 INT 29 POW 22  
DEX 11 MOV fly 14 HP 56

**Damage Bonus:** +6D8.

**Armor:** 20-pt scales.

**Weapons:** Bite 25%, damage 3D8.

Claw 25%, damage 1D6 +db.

Combustible Venom 70%, damage 1D6+4 per round to each target within an area of 55 yards.

**Skills:** Million Spheres 77%, Ponder Dreams 90%, Remember 88%, Search 71%.

## LORD FLASHMAW

A martial, terrible dragon, one cruel and destructive. He delights in closing with his prey and using merciless fang and claw. To resist the dragon's lust for carnage, roll POW:POW on the Resis-

tance Table. Failing, the adventurer too becomes crazed for blood and plunges heedlessly into the fray.

STR 71 CON 75 SIZ 68 INT 17 POW 14  
DEX 14 MOV fly 14 HP 72

**Damage Bonus:** +8D8.

**Armor:** 20-pt scales.

**Weapons:** Bite 57%, damage 3D8.

Claw 81%, damage 1D6 +db.

Combustible Venom 90%, damage 1D6+4 per round to each target within an area of 75 yards.

**Skills:** Revel in Battle 100%, Search 66%.

# SOARING INTO BATTLE

**A**FTER BONDING WITH their dragons, the adventurers are ready to mount. In each cavern is a beautiful saddle, supple and strong. Mounted upon the saddle, goad and horn in hand, each adventurer needs only a whisper of the Carry-Me-Aloft Song, a tap of the goad, or a note of the dragon horn and the dragon takes flight.

At first a dragon seems cumbersome as it shifts uneasily beneath the adventurer. The beast snorts and shakes, its scales rasping against the saddle and its leathery feet slapping across on the rocky floor of the cavern. Sparks fly as massive claws pound against the stone. Then its muscles bunch and the

## DRAGON RIDING

**D**RAGON RIDING IS the culmination of bonding and communication. Bonding establishes a rapport between rider and steed. The various dragon lays, mainly the Command Song, communicate the rider's wishes to the dragon. In combat, allow the players to roll the dragon's attack and damage dice, to emphasize that the two act as one. Dragons prefer to strike with venomous fire rather than claw and fang, but the rider may choose those attacks as he or she needs.

Here are the tools of Dragon Riding.

**THE DRAGON HORN:** a strangely shaped horn which sings out curious notes. Use the dragon horn for short-hand commands when a Dragon Lay would take too long.

**THE DRAGON GOAD:** a long spear-like goad which, like the horn, is used for quick commands. Employ the goad with care, as dragons do not take kindly to goading except in emergency or when noise makes other communication impossible.

**THE SADDLE:** the saddle is ornate and beautifully sculptured, worthy of the magnificence of these great beasts. It fits between the dragon's wings. A long girth, much like that put around a horse, attaches it.



DRAGONS IN FLIGHT

adventurer feels the sweet lifting surge of flight as the great beast roars through the caverns to the vast entrance, and beyond.

Once into the blue skies the dragon unfurls to its full length, and the push of its powerful wings drives it aloft. The dragon is exhilarated at the experience of flying again, and the adventurer must resist the dragon's POW not to share the same exhilaration. At the adventurers' behest the dragons turn northeast, where the Army of the Wind can already be seen.

As the adventurers wing closer to the vanguard of the approaching Army of the Wind, a Search roll identifies the components of the force. They are:

**SCOUT WAGON:** This remarkable craft has a massive sail and huge stout wheels. It rolls across the plain under the power of dozens of wind elementals. A ballista is mounted on the front of the vehicle. Ten Melnibonéan scouts ride upon the wagon, and fifty march behind it.

**INFANTRY:** The main body of the army, three thousand Melnibonéan warriors marching in ranks. They carry gay pennants and wear bright colors, but their faces are set and inhumanly grim.

**CAVALRY:** One thousand fighters on horseback ride at the flanks of the army. These nobles are caparisoned for war. The horses are armored, and the riders carry long spears, many decorated with barbaric pennons in vivid colors.

**THE FLYING CHAMBER:** Ten horses have stout cables attached to them. Each cable connects to a set of ten carved wooden platforms, buoyed high in the air by eddying sylphs. A sorcerer stands on each platform, and the whole arrangement constantly rotates. The platforms are staggered at different heights, towering sixty feet at the highest point. The sorcerers all chant and make complicated gestures, ready to summon further aid from Lassa.

## THE BATTLE IN THE AIR

**T**HE BATTLE BETWEEN THE Dragon Riders and the Army of the Wind should be suitably epic, with opportunities on the part of the adventurers to distinguish themselves heroically. The dragons give the adventurers a distinct advantage, despite the overwhelming odds. Dragon riders should go first in any combat round, to account for their superior speed and power.

### WIND ARMY TACTICS

Below are some of the tactics employed by the Army of the Wind. It is assumed that the army is on the defensive.

**CHARGE:** The cavalry charges any ground forces, hoping to overwhelm them by superior numbers. If this does not work, the infantry moves in, in units of one hundred. If the cavalry is busy elsewhere the infantry act first, attacking en masse.

**DISTRACTION:** The Army of the Wind wishes to keep the dragons off the flying chamber. The cavalry may set up diversionary tactics, grouping into complex formations and running under the dragons. They hurl spears with little real chance of success, but they hope to distract the dragon riders while the sorcerers conduct a summoning.

**THE BALLISTA:** The ballista is the best conventional anti-dragon weapon the Wind Army have. They only have the opportunity for one shot before the dragons are upon them.

**THE WIND DRAGON:** The Sorcerers of the Flying Chamber create a wind dragon, a sylpheap construct taking the form of an enormous dragon. It has a wind-breath attack. This formidable creature represents the Wind Army's only real chance for victory.

## DRAGON RIDER TACTICS

The following attack forms are available for the dragon riders.

**HARRY:** Dragons may harry a flying opponent by flying around or near them and confusing them. This diversionary tactic distracts the opponent for 1D3 rounds, but requires a successful Ride on the part of the dragon rider. Failure means the rider has not succeeded in distracting his opponent. A Fumble leaves the dragon rider in a position vulnerable to attack.

**STRAFE:** Dragons may strafe ground forces, which quickly scatter in the face of bombardment with flammable venom. A successful breath attack hits 1D20 opponents. The wind wagon is flammable and can only withstand 2 hits from a dragon before it is completely destroyed. The sylphs around the flying chamber are strong enough to divert dragon venom, filling the air with a deadly whirlwind of burning liquid that threatens dragon riders and ground forces alike. Adventurers must receive successful Luck rolls to avoid being cooked by their own deflected venom.

**FANG AND CLAW:** As a last-ditch effort dragons will engage in melee, as per the standard combat rules.

## STATISTICS

- For soldiers of the Army of the Wind, use warriors from the *Melnibonéan Digest*.
- For sorcerers, take them from the *Melnibonéan Digest*, deleting all magic save for air elemental summoning and the spell Wings of Lassa.
- For the wind wagon crew, use Warriors from the *Melnibonéan Digest*. Their ballista skill is 90%, but their chance to hit a flying target is halved. The ballista fires once every thirty combat rounds (about five minutes) and causes 10D6 damage. And yes, a ballista can impale.

## WIND DRAGON

This summoned entity is a giant dragon created of whirling wind and eddying currents. Its form can be dimly seen by the occasional appearance of a sylph. Summoning it is the combined effort of ten sorcerers contributing twenty magic points each. It takes them 1D6 rounds to form it. Reduce the entity's statistics and attacks by one-tenth for each sorcerer killed before the summoning is complete.

Its critical weakness is that if dragons fly through it, they can dissipate the thing by throwing the component sylphs into chaos. Riders who come close can note with Search rolls that some sylphs are pulled away from the main body in the wake of a true dragon's passing. Flying directly through the wind dragon causes damage to it equal to the true dragon's STR. However, the rider must make a Ride roll or be hurled out of the saddle by the shrieking winds.

STR 100 CON 100 SIZ 100 INT 15 POW 15  
DEX 20 MOV 15-fly HP 100

**Damage Bonus:** +11D6.

**Abilities:** *Wind-breath*, at 500%, damage 10D10 in a 100 yard area.

*Wind-claw*, at 250%, damage 1D6 +db.

*Wind-bite*, at 250%, damage 5D10.

**Armor:** none, although it is immune to dragon venom and missile attacks.

**Skills:** none.

**Magic Point Cost to Summon:** 200.

## THE BATTLE DONE

**T**HE SURVIVING DRAGONS deposit the surviving adventurers at Castle Crow, and then return to the Dragon Caves, there to rest for a hundred years. They are of no further use in the coming siege.

If the Army of the Wind has been shattered, there is an air of triumph and confidence at the castle. The adventurers are feted as guests of honor, and their names are inscribed among the castle's Defenders of Honor.

If they were instead defeated or driven off, the Army of the Wind makes its rendezvous with the Army of the Balance. The castle's defenders resolve to fight on, but there is a mood of somber doom as the siege preparations are grimly made.

## NIGHT OF THE CROW

**B**Y THE TIME THE adventurers return to the castle, it is nightfall. Much of the mood of the castle depends upon the news the adventurers bring with them (see above). The adventurers are met by Karndell, and brought up to date about the conflict.

The diplomatic party met with success, but only in delaying the main attack until tomorrow. The Balance force is larger than they were led to believe, some twelve thousand strong. It is commanded by Prince Rellvaan the Eagle, a skilled warrior and tactician who wields the Sword of Harmony, a powerful weapon of the Balance. Rellvaan is grouping his forces now and will attack at dawn. The Balance sorcerers need time to prepare for the onslaught, as do those of Chaos within the castle walls. An Insight roll notes that Karndell's face sets when he speaks the name of Prince Rellvaan. He has been forbidden to say any more about the enemy leader, and cannot be drawn on the subject.

Prince Dusac has decreed that this last night is to be spent in a feast. The adventurers are invited. The celebrations are set to begin in two hours in the Great Hall. The adventurers are free to amuse themselves as they see fit until then.

## FINDING THE GLASS

**T**HE ADVENTURERS ARE likely to spend the time before the feast locating or learning about the Suffer Glass. Several ways exist for them to accomplish this goal.

**EXPLORATION:** the castle is huge, and only the most cursory search could be conducted in the time available. Aside from the Library and the Great Hall, most of the other rooms are private chambers and areas such as kitchens, washrooms and the like. The top floor of the castle has been cleared of all fittings and made into a massive Summoning Hall for the coming battle. Sorcerers and servants are busily carving intricate sigils upon all of the floors and surfaces.

**INTERVIEWING CASTLE PERSONNEL:** most retainers of the prince, identifiable in his livery, know of the glass and



of its resting place behind the tapestry in the Great Hall. They also know it has important properties and that it is to be used in tonight's festivities. They speak freely to the adventurers, as guests of their prince and obvious kinsmen.

**LOITERING IN THE GREAT HALL:** once it has been established where the glass lies, the adventurers find they cannot get access to it before the feast. The hall is teeming with servants. The gamemaster may wish to reward any particularly ingenious player scheme to heist the glass, but the task should be difficult. If taken, its loss would be discovered within half an hour, throwing the castle into uproar.

**RESEARCH:** the castle has an extensive library. Four volumes contain knowledge or hints about the Suffer Glass. Each book can be located with a Search roll, and understood with a Scribe roll.

➤ *Verities and Enchantments* tells of eight great artifacts of Chaos, and amongst them lists the Suffer Glass. It says that such devices may only be destroyed by a great artifact of equal power, of the Balance or of Law. The book tells nothing of the actual nature of the glass.

● *Lord of the Seven Darks* is a volume of poetry in homage to Arioch. An early verse mentions a crystal cup from which Arioch sups before he first comes to this plane. A later poem says that he will drink from it once more before he ascends to his utter dominion over the world, when it brims with the hot blood of sundered kin.

➤ *Spheres of Marvels Untold* is a lexicon of the dimensions, a long scroll of other planes which the author had visited. The last place on the list is the Suffer Plane, a realm where pain is exquisite.

● *The Lost Book of Kam'n'mell Kam'n'mlar* is an elderly tome kept in the upper stacks. It contains the following passage concerning the suffer glass: "Long have been the years that the strange dragon vessel has rested in Castle Crow. Longer still have been the hours devoted to its study. While interpretations are as multitudinous as scholars, all agree that the Suffer Glass holds great Chaotic forces within its fragile surface, ones powerful enough to bring down our castle's walls. Harnessing this power would seem beyond the finest scholar, but should it be done, such a flowering of Chaos would follow as surely to be a wonder upon the face of the world."

## THE SUFFER GLASS

**T**HE GLASS is a crystal goblet with a wide bowl, thin stem, and wide base. Cavorting dragons are delicately etched on its surfaces, their tails entwining around the stem. The glass is incredibly light but very strong. It looks as though a mere whisper would shatter it, but this is not the case.

Drinking from the glass brings a feeling of intense agony mixed with great revelation. Adventurers who receive successful CON x1 rolls experience some of the cosmic outlook of the elder races (those who get failures fall into a pain-wracked stupor for 1D3 hours). Allow the fortunate a Luck roll each. With a success, his or her INT rises permanently by 1 point. Falling, those minds are scourged by the experience and each loses 1 point of INT.

# THE FEAST OF THE DOOMED

**T**HE ENEMY GATHERS OUT on the plain. Anyone can walk along the battlements and see the forces massing against the castle. The Army of the Balance is orderly, and the campfires like stars twinkle everywhere. They wait implacably for the dawn.

Within, rumors circulate that the revolt goes well in H'hui'shan, but no one knows if this is true, or if it has meaning if it is true, for the main blow of the Balance is surely against Castle Crow itself. There is merriment, but also doubt. All may be dead in the morning.

The prince and his followers brook no mention of fears. Dusac is intent only on the esoteric debaucheries he has planned for the coming festivities. For him the war is a thing remote, not camped without his very door.

Thirty Melnibonéan nobles attend the main table of the feast. The adventurers find themselves included in this resplendent company if their fight against the Army of the Wind went well. Kamdell is at the table, and so is the diplomat Lord Jador, though he disdains to speak to mere warriors. The rest of the castle complement are spread around the massive hall at long tables. Everyone has dressed in their most elaborate finery.

The Great Hall is lit with a thousand tall candles, each with a flame of a different hue. Weird paper and fabric constructs depend from the ceiling and shift to a demon wind, creating various patterns and color combinations. In the center of the room is a massive brazier. Pungent, aromatic smoke uncurls from its belly and insinuates itself into the room.

A gong is struck, and the prince makes his entrance. All stand. He is dressed in a heavy brocade robe, rich with threads of silver and gold. Tableaux embroidered on his robe seem to shift and replay as he walks. He turns to his guests.

"I offer you a banquet of eight courses. We shall revel in Chaos, and it shall consume us. First we shall simultaneously feast seven times over on food, drink, dreams, diversions, death, dissonance and discourse. The eighth course is suffering, and it starts with silence. The signal shall be a small chime. Those who talk after the chime will be put to death. Now begin."

The hall erupts in tumultuous revelling, as all strive to follow the prince's instructions. Servants sweep forwards in a busy tide, bearing platters of exotic foodstuffs, decanters of vintage wine, and trays of hallucinogens. Acrobats and jugglers burst into the hall, tumbling and spinning. Prisoners taken from early skirmishes against the soldiers of the Balance are marched in and killed one by one, by poison, strangulation, decapitation, dismemberment, drowning, hanging, crushing, or stabbing. A discordant orchestra strikes up, eight slave musicians each with eight instruments apiece, each playing a passage either up or down an octave and then changing instrument, creating a swirling growl of rising and falling notes.

During all of this, the Melnibonéans discuss, dispute, and debate. Subjects touched upon include philosophy, sorcery, theology, metaphysics, arts, and weather. Nobody mentions

the war. The adventurers experience at first-hand the subtleties and ironies of Melnibonéan conversation, which has a tendency to turn back on itself in a welter of allusion and self-referencing. They must succeed at Fast Talk rolls to keep up, or else be thought of as simpletons. Lord Jadlor in particular is quick to make jokes at the adventurers' expense.

The talk gets louder, the executions increase in pace, the musicians play faster and faster, the performers stage more complex and dangerous displays, and the hallucinating guests begin to shriek in delight and laugh with terror. The thousand candles burn to their half-way mark and suddenly become fireworks, splashing the hall with vibrant punctuation of sound and color.

In the midst of all this chaos, Prince Dusac takes a tiny silver chime from his pocket and taps it with a pin. Adventurers may receive both Search rolls to see him take out the chime, and Listen rolls to actually hear the sound. Those who succeed may attempt Dexterity rolls to warn their comrades with a quick gesture. The chime sounds.

Everything stops. A dozen or so people, possibly including some of the adventurers, are caught out. Everyone is silent. Without a word, the disgraced courtiers rise and walk over to the executioners, who kill them soundlessly.

## THE CEREMONY OF THE SUFFERERS

**D**URING THE HUSHED silence a slave appears, altered especially for the occasion. He is a baroque living interpretation of pain, a breathing edifice of agony. His eyes have been sewn open and his flesh cut and sliced and re-sewn, so that his entire exposed torso is a patchwork of stunning and exquisite design, so symmetrical and fantastic one can almost forget the suffering of its wearer. If Melnibonéan, of course, no one would care, except to applaud the artistry.

In his hands the slave carries a velvet purple cushion. Atop the cushion is the Suffer Glass. Boiling in the vessel is a viscous blue liquid shot with yellow. The slave brings the glass to the prince.

Prince Dusac addresses specifically those at his own table. "Now my guests, my honored elite, is the time to quaff of the glass of Arioeh himself, the cup of torment, the carafe of malaise, the goblet of agony, the beaker of pain, the chalice of distress. The Suffer Glass!"

So saying, the prince drinks deeply from the glass. At once his face contorts in pain. Even as his features writhe in terrible agony, his body twitching and spasming, there is a look upon his face which bespeaks of wondrous enlightenment, a glimpse into realms beyond even his advanced imagining.

As the glass passes around, each of the guests quaff it. The effect on them is immediate and does not pass for half an hour. No matter how much is drunk from the glass, liquid always remains for the next partaker. The adventurers are expected to drink also, and will be frowned upon if they do not. Such behavior is reported to the prince afterwards and a good excuse should be prepared.



SUCH EXQUISITE SUFFERING

## THE LONG NIGHT

**T**HE FEAST BREAKS UP. Prince Dusac retires to his chambers. The rest of the revelers split into smaller groups and wander elsewhere in the castle. The Suffer Glass is taken away to the Summoning Hall, which is now complete and empty.

The adventurers may leave the table with whomever they please, or remain in the Great Hall. If they elect to follow the glass or to follow Lord Jadlor, the results are seen below—see 'Lord Jadlor's Expense.'

### LORD JADLOR'S EXPENSE

**I**T IS LORD JADLOR'S INTENTION to steal the Suffer Glass this night and take it to the Army of the Balance. During his negotiations with Prince Rellvaan he decided to change sides, more for his own survival than from any philosophical motives.

Jadlor's plan, if the adventurers do not intercede at any stage, is as follows. He goes at once to the Summoning Hall. There the suffering slave squats with the glass before him.



## THE SWORD OF HARMONY

**THE SWORD IS A** great sword, pure white in color, as though ceramic. It always hits for 16 points of damage, and any Lawful or Chaotic creature from another plane is instantly banished by its touch. In combat it shines with a pure light, and sounds a radiant humming. No one given to either Law or Chaos can harm the wielder of the Sword of Harmony. In this instance, given is defined as having more than 10 points in Law or Chaos.

The sword and wielder strive for perfect Balance, with each other and with the world around them. If ever the wielder commits an act against this creed, or if the sword is confronted by a cosmic event which challenges the very foundation of the Balance, the sword shatters.

Unless halted, Jadlor slays the slave, and stows the glass in a velvet pouch worn beneath his cloak. He descends the castle stairs to the rear courtyard, where his mount awaits. Jadlor announces that he is to make one last diplomatic gambit, and demands that the gate be opened for him. He is obeyed and flees into the night.

Once outside the walls he makes for the Army of the Balance. It is a twenty minute ride, and he may be caught by pursuers achieving Ride rolls. Again he claims that he is on a mission for Prince Dusac. If all else fails he casts the spell Speed of Vezhan on his horse and tries to make good his escape.

If Jadlor reaches the Balance army alive with the glass, he is welcomed and thanked. Prince Rellvaan draws the Sword of Harmony, and smashes the Suffer Glass. The adventurers have failed, but only in Doctor Qua's opinion. In a sense, the victory is theirs, for they have thwarted the doctor's plans by their own inactivity. They must yet face his wrath. Proceed to The Doctor's Orders, at the scenario's conclusion.

If Jadlor is captured by the adventurers, they are well rewarded by the Prince of Crows, who promises a bag of silver and new armor each. Under pain of subtle tortures, Jadlor confesses his attempt to take the glass to the enemy. He has seen the Sword of Harmony and knows it to be the deadly enemy of the Suffer Glass. By offering up the glass, he hoped to gain asylum with the Balance army. Once Prince Dusac has decided he can get no more out of Jadlor, he orders Jadlor's slow death.

### LORD JADLOR, TREASONOUS DIPLOMAT

Chaos 144, Balance 100, Law 51

STR 11	CON 13	SIZ 15	INT 18	POW 17
DEX 12	APP 10		HP 14	MP 17

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Armor: none.

Weapons: Rapier 87%, damage 1D6+1 +db

Skills: Bargain 130%, Fast Talk 136%, Insight 141%, Melnibonéan 101%, Move Quietly 63%, Oratory 129%.

Spells: Demon's Ear (1), Hell's Razor (1-4), Liken Shape (4), Midnight (1), Speed of Vezhan (1-3).

### PRINCE RELLYAAN, PRINCE OF EAGLES

Chaos 85, Balance 98, Law 89

STR 18	CON 17	SIZ 17	INT 23	POW 24
DEX 16	APP 16		HP 17	MP 24

Damage Bonus: +1D6.

Armor: 1D10+6 (helm on), Melnibonéan Plate.

Weapon: Sword of Harmony 256%, damage 16+db

Spells: Bounty of Straasha (4), Flames of Kakatal (4), Gift of Grome (4), Invoke Fleet Lady of Birds 48%, Summon Elemental (1), Wings of Lassa (4).

Skills: Call Eagle 115%, Dodge 168%, High Speech 90%, Melnibonéan 115%, Million Spheres 51%, Oratory 115%, Ride 184%, Tactics 123%.

## THE ARMY OF THE BALANCE

Select warriors from the *Melnibonéan Digest*, deleting all spells and summonings save those relating to the elements.

## THE FATEFUL MESSENGER

**A**FTER MIDNIGHT, any atop the walls note a disturbance in the enemy camp. A rider pelts through them, dodging blows, and breaks free to the castle. The night-watch quickly open the gates to admit him, and slam them shut before the enemy can exploit the momentary breach.

Adventurers who are awake hear word of the arrival, or perhaps even witness it if they are abroad. If they have retired to their chambers, those making a Listen roll are woken by sounds at their window, the clattering of hooves in the courtyard below.

The rider's name is Dyvlaak Tvim, and he wears the black-and-silver uniform of the Dragon Troops of Prince Asdarc. He has been wounded many times in his dash through the enemy's ranks, and a Physik roll notes that he is near death. He gasps only "Take me to the prince," and will speak to none other, nor stop to receive healing. His news to Dusac is that Asdarc sends his profound regrets, but can spare no aid to Castle Crow in her hour of need, as all of his forces are involved in the attack on H'hui'shan.

Dyvlaak's arrival jeopardizes the adventurer's cover. If Asdarc has sent no troops, then who on earth are they? They must act to silence the messenger. They can do this by loudly declaring that he is a spy or an impostor, or simply say that they were sent ahead, and that Asdarc must have changed his mind since.

With successful Fast Talk rolls, Prince Dusac believes them, for they have already done him great service in defeating the Army of the Wind. They might also sidle up to the wounded Dyvlaak and quietly stab him. A Conceal Object roll disguises the weapon, and all assume that the fellow expired of his wounds before he could deliver his message. Whether or not he is stabbed, Dyvlaak soon dies.

If the adventurers do nothing to cover themselves, Prince Dusac summons them and demands an explanation. His full suspicions are roused, and only a successful Oratory combined with a good story will allay them. If this fails, the adventurers are seized and thrown into the dungeons beneath Castle Crow. Prince Dusac promises them torture so novel that they will admire its genius even as they shriek in pain, but he delays commencement until after he has dealt with the oncoming battle. The adventurers may sit harmlessly in the cells, or attempt an escape. Such events are left to the gamemaster.



## THE ADVENTURERS' DECISION

**W**ITH BOTH JADLOR and the messenger dealt with, all falls silent in Castle Crow, as the defenders retire to their chambers, perhaps for the last time. The adventurers are faced with a decision. What are they to do regarding the glass? The ramifications of their actions are discussed below, in the section headed Glass, Sword, Adventurers.

This night is the adventurers' first and last chance to act. If they seize the opportunity, and visit the Balance army, or steal the glass, the gamemaster must determine the outcome using the guidelines below. If they are content to let events take their course, dawn comes, and brings with it a war such as the adventurers have never seen.

## GLASS, SWORD, ADVENTURERS

**T**HREE COMPONENTS determine the scenario's conclusion, and the fate of the future thereby. These three are the Suffer Glass, the Sword of Harmony and the adventurers themselves.

### THE SWORD AND THE GLASS

The only thing that can break the Suffer Glass is a powerful weapon of Law or the Balance, such as the Sword of Harmony. Historically, this transpired, and the glass was broken.

However, now the adventurers are present. If they take action to either remove the glass or destroy the sword, history will be changed. If they do nothing concerning the glass, and never come into contact with the sword, history is assured, and Doctor Qua is foiled.

### THE ADVENTURERS AND THE SWORD

The only thing which can break the Sword of Harmony is a chronic Imbalance. The adventurers are such an event. If ever the adventurers and the sword should meet, Doctor Qua incants the ritual which makes them real and human. This is described below, under the heading Flesh and Bone. The Balance is defied and the sword is sundered. With nothing left to threaten it, the glass survives.

Two chances exist for the adventurers to meet Prince Rellvaan, the wielder of the sword. The first is on the eve of the siege, if they choose to ride out to the Army of the Balance, either at their own behest or while pursuing Lord Jadlor. The second is during the siege itself, when the Balance army breaks through the walls and into Castle Crow.

### THE ADVENTURERS AND THE GLASS

If the adventurers steal the Suffer Glass, or hide it, or otherwise keep it from the sword, then it is saved. If they are suspected of such a theft, they are pursued by Prince Dusac and his troops. The gamemaster can enact exciting scenes of fight and flight. If the adventurers are not captured, or the

glass' hiding place is not discovered, it survives into Doctor Qua's time.

## THE END RESULT

**I**F THE GLASS IS NOT destroyed, the future is changed. Proceed to the section headed The Future in Chaos, below.

If the glass is destroyed, the future is unaffected. Proceed to The Doctor's Orders, located at the end of the scenario.

## THE SIEGE BEGINS

**O**NCE DAY BREAKS, the Army of the Balance stirs. Across the ranks and rows of soldiers there is movement as thousands of figures rise as one. The air above the army stirs with the summoned forces of elementals and the noise of a hundred thousand animals of all kinds as they arrive at the behest of the Beast Lords.

Within Castle Crow the great summoning begins. Horrors and beauties, martial and protective, demons of all descriptions begin to mill in the Summoning Hall at the top of the castle. The powers massed here are so great the siege is not destined to last long.

### ADVENTURERS IN THE BATTLE

The battle demonstrates the overwhelming power available to the Melnibonéans at this point of their history. The battle follows none of the understandable tactics of conventional combat.

The adventurers should have a chance to exchange blows with enemies, but few engagements last more than a couple of rounds before a burst of magic changes the ebb and flow of the battle. This is not a toe-to-toe fight, but a vast and magical conflict.

Have each adventurer roll on the Battle Events table a few times. These simulate the bizarre and shifting nature of the battle.

### ENEMIES AND ALLIES

As needed, take statistics from the *Melnibonéan Digest* to represent the forces in the battle.

## SIGHTS FROM THE BATTLE OF CASTLE CROW

**B**ELOW ARE SOME OF THE sights and sounds of the battle raging around and above the adventurers.

➤ A thousand eagles fly into the eyes of great scaled demons as they hop over the ramparts.

## BATTLE EVENTS TABLE

1. A warrior of the Balance engages the adventurer in melee. Next round, the opponent is pulled headfirst into the air by a laughing demon.
2. A javelin composed of glowing blue light is hurled at the adventurer, and he or she must roll Dodge to avoid it. If hit, the adventurer is paralyzed for 1D10 rounds unless able to resist its POT of 20 with his or her CON.
3. Golden eagles dive down on the adventurer, causing him or her 1D20 points of damage in accumulated pecking and taloning. Next round a swarm of ravens intercepts the eagles, and the air is filled with black and gold feathers.
4. A battlement near the adventurer collapses into sand. Roll Jump for the adventurer, or he or she is buried. If buried, he or she suffocates as per the Drowning rules unless rescued by a comrade.
5. A demon fighting alongside the adventurer suddenly detonates. The adventurer is caught in the fringe of the blast, for 2D6 points of damage.
6. The air around the adventurer becomes liquid. Unless he or she has the Breath of Life spell, drowning begins. Movement through the liquid is at half normal speed. The effect passes after 1D10 rounds.
7. A noise of impossible pitch sounds. Unless the adventurer receives a roll of CON x5 or less, he or she blacks out for 1D6 rounds.
8. A Balance warrior riding on a sylph races past the adventurer, aiming a blow in passing. Unless parried, the blow causes 1D8+1+1D4 damage.
9. A wild boar charges the adventurer, on fire and squealing. Unless Dodged, its tusks strike for 1D8+2D6. The burning pig keeps running.
10. Three warriors of the Balance attack the adventurer. Prince Dusac charges forward and slays two of them outright with one thrust of each of his swords. The adventurer must deal with the third.
11. A powerful wind elemental tosses the adventurer high into the air. A swooping demon rescues him or her before he or she hits the ground.
12. A cloud of raging purple fire arcs across the ranks of the defenders. The adventurer must roll his or her Luck or be ignited for 1D6 points of damage.
13. The ground underneath the adventurer disappears as a gnome shifts it aside. The adventurer must receive a successful Jump roll, or fall into the hole for 1D6 damage.
14. A deafening explosion gives the adventurer concussion unless the player can roll CON x5. Failing, the adventurer can do nothing but crawl on hands and knees for 1D10 rounds.
15. A mounted knight charges down on the adventurer with a steel lance. Seconds before impact, horse and rider are turned to stone.
16. A carpet of venomous snakes slither around the adventurer. With a successful Luck roll, they bite harmlessly at the adventurer's stout boots. Failing the roll, one grazes a thigh and injects adder venom of POT 10.
17. Demon guts rain down on the adventurer, debris from some mid-air combat. Failing a Dexterity roll, he or she slips over in the muck.
18. A fire elemental grazes across the heads of the defenders. Failing a Luck roll, the adventurer is set alight for 1D6 points of damage per round.
19. A prismatic ripple of air appears. The adventurer must roll Dexterity to avoid it. Failing, he or she and the stones nearby are hurled into another plane where purple grass waves slowly under a bloated red sun. After a few moments, a demon pops up through the grass to carry him back to the battle.
20. An arrow strikes the adventurer for 2D6+1 damage.

- The noisome smell of plague demons infests everything as they stand upon the battlements and turn to slimy ooze, dripping their diseased matter upon the heads of the enemy.
- Gnomes begin to tear apart the walls, while demons of all kinds devour them with glee.
- A barrage of sylphs lift Balance warriors over the walls, but the defenders waiting there impale them on gleaming spikes.
- Hordes of tiny demons pour out of rents in the castle to bedevil the attackers.
- Fierce battle lust shines in the eyes of the Melnibonéans on both sides, sometimes made poignant by the ironic realization that they are slaying their own kin.
- A dirge to the Lords of Chaos is on the lips of Captain Karndell as he is systematically torn to pieces by the razor claws of a hundred lionesses.
- Prince Dusac fights with a red great sword in each hand, his lean frame swelled to powerful proportions by the blessings of the Dukes of Hell.
- Prince Rellvaan, a tall blond figure, oddly familiar, wielding a sword which flashes with scorching white light that no demon or Chaos warrior can withstand.

## THE RETREAT

THE FORCES ASSAILING THE castle prove too strong. The wall crumbles and the Balance army surges in. Prince Dusac sounds the retreat, and all who can fall back to make a stand at the Great Hall. The enemy is hard on his heels. The adventurers may regroup with him as he falls back:

- A successful Dexterity roll allows them to be by his side.
- Those who fail find that one average opponent stands between them and retreat.
- Those who fumble the roll face 1D6 opponents, and must fight their way through or perish. Companions nearby may help, but this requires a Search roll to notice that a compatriot in trouble.

Within the hall, the prince seizes the Suffer Glass, ready to defend it with his life (unless the glass has already been hidden by the adventurers). He calls his patron Arioch to the fray.

The door is battered open, and there stands Prince Rellvaan at the head of his forces, holding aloft the shining Sword of Harmony. The two princes stare at each other, and it is suddenly clear to onlookers that they are in fact twin brothers, their kinship severed by the Civil War. One chose to serve the cup of pain, the other the sword of justice. They gaze at each other, light and dark reflected, and then rush together.



## FLESH AND BONE

**D**OCTOR QUA SEES everything through the eyes of the adventurers. As soon as they are near the Sword of Harmony, he plays his hand.

At once a strange sensation comes over the adventurers. A blinding glow envelopes them, and everyone else present falls back, shielding their eyes. The adventurers warp and change, and suddenly stand before the assembled Melnibonéans in their true human form. After being Melnibonéan for so long, their real bodies seem flabby and ungainly, ape-like and hairy. The voice of Doctor Qua rings out from across the gulf of time. Already a wind is whirling through the hall, tainted with yellow and red.

"Thank you, my pets. Your presence has altered the subtle forces of the Balance. See how the instrument of the glass' destruction is itself destroyed. Your very humanity has doomed the future of your race. Oh, exquisite irony."

The Sword of Harmony loses its luster. Its blade darkens and becomes riven with cracks. It shatters, falling in dead pieces at Rellvaan's feet.

All else, for the adventurers, is gold and crimson. The scene blurs and disappears. On the journey back they can reflect on how cruelly they have been tricked. The Time Wind shrieks at their senses. Adventurers receive the improved chance of CON x4 to stay conscious, as they have felt these winds before.

## THE FUTURE IN CHAOS

**T**HE ADVENTURERS ARRIVE at the place from which they left, the Summoning Chamber of Doctor Qua. It is still the same edifice, its design and nature as before, except that the Suffer Glass stands pristine and whole on its black pedestal.

Outside, things are by no means the same. Through the windows, the graceful towers of Imrryr are gone. In their place is seething Chaos stuff, ever changing, ever reforming. The landscape is sometimes beautiful, sometimes ugly, but never static. Whole coastlines and cities form, only to be swept away in the next chaos whim.

### CHANGING WITH THE TIMES

The heritage of humanity has changed. The adventurers' players must now make Luck rolls. Success means that although the adventurers are now slightly debased versions of themselves, they are essentially the same. Failure means they have been altered by the fact that the Young Kingdoms grew to maturity under the blanket of Chaos. Subtract 1D6 from APP, INT, and POW. A fumbled roll means that they have not been born at all, and vanish soon after their return. If the past is set



DOCTOR QUA, I PRESUME?

to rights, these changes are rectified, even that of complete annihilation.

## THE DOCTOR OF DISORDER

**T**HE DOOR TO THE Summoning Chamber shudders open. Doctor Qua enters. He is no longer the urbane Melnibonéan, but a pulsating gibbous thing with six legs and two drooling mouths. Behind him comes a surge of chaos matter, carrying demons. The demons in turn bear the forms of any comrades who have been sent back to this time through their deaths in the past.

"It is true!" the doctor exclaims. "The readings were correct and here you are! Oh my friends, will you help?"

A successful Insight roll establishes that Qua has changed inwardly as well as outwardly. Once a cruel sorcerer who sought only for Chaos, now he is a worried scholar who strives to rescind the mistakes of the past.

Qua tells the history of the Suffer Glass. The glass was saved from near destruction by the bizarre appearance of humans at the battle of Castle Crow, an act which shattered the Sword of Harmony, the only weapon capable of destroying the glass. The humans vanished, and in their place Arioch appeared, in answer to the call of Prince Dusac the Raven. The Duke of the Seven Darks utterly vanquished the forces of the Balance, and as his reward drank deep from the glass, as he had before he came to this plane. With this act the true power of the glass



## THE DEMON KEY

**T**HE KEY THAT QUA has given the adventurers is a small gibbering demon, soft and round. It cannot speak, merely nod and roll its putrid yellow eyeballs and look encouraging.

was unleashed. Chaos was given utter dominion upon the world, and all lands were made one.

Qua has studied the Glass for many years, and knows how the adventurers may undo what they have done. If he sends them back on the winds of time, they must destroy the glass before its power is invoked, defying Arioch himself. They can accomplish this by entering the glass, by means of a sentient demon key which he gives to them. Once within the glass, they must locate its core and destroy it. This will ensure their return and set everything to rights.

Qua gives them little time to decide. With his new chaos powers he is able to summon the Time Winds with one fluttering gesticulation and three short syllables. Once again, the adventurers are swept away.

## BACK TO THE PAST

**A** GAIN VIA THE CHAOS wind the adventurers are swept back in time. They stay conscious with a successful CON x5 roll.

They arrive at exactly the same time and place that they left, as the Sword of Harmony shatters forever. This may have occurred at the camp of the Army of the Balance, or in the Great Hall of Castle Crow.

The adventurers must reach the Suffer Glass. If Prince Dusac has it, this is comparatively easy. If they hid it somewhere, they must first escape, using the momentary confusion of the sword's destruction to slip away. They may soon be pursued by both the forces of Chaos and the Balance, depending on how they have allied themselves.

Once they have the glass, the demon key does the rest. With a high-pitched gibber and a noxious squirt it dissolves itself into a greenish ichor. It floods over the adventurers, transforming their flesh into fluid. They swirl around and into the glass, and plunge downwards into the strange world of the Suffer Glass, the Suffer Plane.

## THE SUFFER PLANE

**F**ROM THE RAGE and horror of the Melnibonéan Civil War the adventurers are plunged into a world which seems at first to be one of quietude and placidity. They stand upon the shore of a surging

river, with a lowering mucus-green sky palpitating overhead. A Listen roll hears wails and moans from the river and the far shore, the sounds of suffering.

## THE DEMON RAFT

**A** THICK MIST DESCENDS upon the river, bilious green, like the sky. Out of the mist drifts a raft. The craft is created from hundreds of bodies lashed together. Each is still alive and aware of their situation. They moan and gibber and their eyes roll. Piloting the craft is a hideous demon, a great many-eyed seeping thing with muscles bulging like burst flesh. Its toothless head grins at the adventurers as it beckons them aboard.

"Where would you go?" the demon asks. "I go to the seat of the King of Torment. Have you the stomach for judgement?"

If the adventurers decline, the demon cannot resist its stock joke. It pulls a pulsating human stomach out from under its robes and tosses it at the adventurers' feet. "There," it says, "now you have." If the adventurers refuse to go with him they must wait until he returns one day later. Exploration of the shores of the river reveals dead landscape and more oppressive cries of pain. Among the cries the adventurers identify people whose suffering they have caused. After this time, the reappearance of the boatman should be a relief.

If they choose to board, the demon has a toll to extract. A hidden appendage shoots out from the demon's throat, tipped with a rusted and leprous claw. The claw only causes 1D4 damage, but it leaves a hideous scar. This is the demon's price. A Dodge roll evades the throat-claw, but the person cannot climb on board and must wait on the bank.

Adventurers who are scarred must roll Luck. On a success the scar is somewhere unnoticeable. Failure means it is on the face, and the adventurer must deduct one point of APP. A fumble means that the demon has inflicted a hideous scar upon the adventurer's visage, causing 1D6 lost points of APP. These scars are borne by the adventurers for the rest of their days, and defy any alteration in time to correct or remove.

### THE RIVER DEMON, HIDEOUS BOATMAN

The demon reacts badly to attacks from the adventurers. Such offenders earn an instant position as part of the raft's complement of bodies, moaning and gibbering along with the rest of them. Lashed adventurers remain so until rescued by their comrades.

STR 50	CON 89	SIZ 41	INT 14	POW 27
DEX 19	MOV 10			HP 65

**Damage Bonus:** +5D6

**Abilities:** *Hidden Claw*, at 150%, damage is 1D4 plus a scar for 1 APP unless a Luck roll is made.

*Paralyze*, at 100%, victim must resist the demon's CON of 89. Paralyzed victims are grabbed and lashed to the raft. When their paralysis wears off, they can escape the raft on a roll of STR x1, but each attempt causes them 1D6 damage. Reduced to zero hit points, they find that they cannot die, but nor can they escape evermore.

**Armor:** the demon can sustain vast amounts of pain and does not bleed, so all weapons cause minimum possible damage.

**Need:** scar any passengers traveling on the raft, after inflicting them with the stomach joke.

**Skills:** Search 100%.

**Magic Point Cost to Summon:** 85.

## THE JOURNEY

**T**HE DEMON PILOTS THE raft across the river of phlegm. The demon's sole topic of conversation rests on how greatly the passengers will suffer when they meet the King of Torment.

The landscape is dead and sickening. On both sides of the river can be seen figures twisted with pain. A man wanders along the shore, calling to the raft. His entrails are over his shoulder, and dogs pursue him as they sup.

## THE THRONE OF PAIN

**T**HE RAFT REACHES THE POINT where the river appears to end, or perhaps where it begins. A massive chamber floats upon the water and a mile-wide ramp runs up to the huge standing gates. On all surfaces of the chamber are depicted scenes of pain and suffering so terrible as to make the things the adventurers have seen so far pale by comparison. The demon makes the adventurers step off onto the ramp, and frees those who have been part of the raft. "If you cannot defeat him, all the suffering you have caused others will be visited on you a thousandfold. I hope you were kind to those you met in life." Guffawing, the demon departs.

At the top of the ramp, the gates open onto the sole room of the floating chamber. The entire room is lined with surging chaos matter. The King of Torment sits within, awaiting the raft's cargo. He is a handsome man, whose body is a feast of pain and lacerations, of suppurating wounds and festering sores. His throne is made of spikes, burning coals, nails and ground glass, all entwined around a stone frame. He is massive, at least ten feet tall, and he beams down at the adventurers.

## THE KING'S CHALLENGE

**T**HE KING WELCOMES THE adventurers heartily and offers his challenge, without ado. "Hear this: if you defeat me, I am destroyed and you are free. Fail and you are mine." At this a panoply of suffering individuals is

## THE KING OF TORMENT

**T**HE KING IS A greater demon, almost a god on this plane. He is immune to pain of all kinds, so that any damage inflicted upon him grants him more power over this terrible domain. The foaming stuff around him is the surging power of Chaos, just waiting to break out of the glass and upon the world, bringing suffering with it.

The King may pluck anything out of the chaos matter he sees fit, though he is unlikely to, since he disdains combat, having no need. (The adventurers can form individual objects by exerting their own wills, but they'll have to come up with the idea on their own.) When the adventurers have ceased to amuse him, he merely plucks a lasso of iron from the walls and binds them in it. Demons come to take them to their torments. The world remains as it is, until such times as Qua finds more debased humans to send on his quest.



THE KING OF TORMENT

flashed before the eyes of the adventurers. All manner of mental and physical torment is theirs to feast upon. The King plucks a fistful of chaos matter out of the wall and forms it into a sword. He throws it at the feet of the adventurers. "This is chaos, and capable of anything." Then the King merely laughs, folds his arms and waits for their attack.

## DEFEATING THE KING

**T**HE KING CAN BE defeated, and easily. With every sword thrust, with every lash, with every punch he laughs and delights. "More!" he cries, as though feeling none of it. Indeed, he seems to grow larger each time.

The adventurers may end his reign and destroy the glass simply by making him comfortable. A pillow or cushion plucked from the walls of Chaos would ease his suffering. A successful use of an Art or Craft might take his mind off

things. Five comforts in succession and he is defeated. He screams for the adventurers to stop as he feels better and better. At last, when it is all too much, the walls around him shatter, and there is a deafening sound of breaking glass. The adventurers are hurled back out of the Suffer Plane, and back to the worldly location of the glass.

## THE END OF THE GLASS

**S**OME TIME HAS passed since the adventurers dissolved into the glass. The scene of their return is one of victory for Chaos. Prince Rellvaan lies dead at the feet of his brother, Prince Dusac. A terrible figure towers over the brooding prince, Arioch of the Seven Darks. Arioch holds the Suffer Glass to his lips, ready to drink the blood of Rellvaan, spilled by his brother's hand.

Arioch's refreshment turns to blinding pain as the glass cracks apart. He roars with anger, but already the Time Wind is embracing the adventurers and bearing them away to safety.

Chaos has lost the Suffer Glass, but won the war. The adventurers catch a glimpse of the terrible desolation of H'hui'shan. But the loss is not eternal. Other heroes and champions will come to restore the Balance, even from among the ranks of the Melnibonéans themselves.

## THE TAINT OF MELNIBONÉ

**B**ECOMING MELNIBONÉAN might have a profound effect on a human. Players should attempt POW x1 rolls for each adventurer. With a success, add 1D3 to their INT, add one point to their Chaos box, and roll once on the Taint Table. Failures suffer no effect but for occasional nightmares.

### TAINT TABLE

Roll 1D8

1. *Callous.* The adventurer becomes indifferent to all suffering, even his or her own.
2. *Chaos-aligned.* The adventurer forgoes previous vows and takes up the cause of Chaos.
3. *Haunted.* The adventurer sees visions of a bleak and desolate future, in which entropy reduces all things. There is no hope.
4. *Distant.* The adventurer finds it difficult to appreciate ordinary life. Visions of greater knowledge are teasingly perceived.
5. *Dragonkin.* The adventurer has been profoundly changed by association with dragons. From now on he or she can communicate with dragons like a Melnibonéan, but the adventurer also becomes dark of outlook and chaotic and random in nature.
6. *Chaos Whimsy.* The adventurer always uses random means to make decisions, even vital ones.
7. *Doom-Driven.* The adventurer perceives his or her own doom, brought by constant warfare, struggle, and strife. Violence becomes more attractive, because it will lead him or her to a true wyrd.
8. *Cursed.* The adventurer is permanently transformed into the Melnibonéan form assumed during the time journey. Family and friends no longer welcome him or her. Shunned in the human Young Kingdoms, he or she may need to align with Chaos in order to survive.

## THE DOCTOR'S ORDERS

**F**OR THE LAST TIME THE adventurers ride the Time Wind, and may make CON x5 rolls to avoid passing out. It leaves them where they started, in Melniboné. All is at it should be. Imrryr is still here, fair and delicate in the evening air.

Doctor Qua waits impatiently, Melnibonéan once more, his greedy eyes fixed eagerly on the shards of the glass. When it does not reassemble, he turns on the adventurers with a terrible glare. Because they averted the future's doom, his mutation therefore never occurred. He has no memory of being a Chaos monstrosity, nor of sending them back to specifically destroy the glass. He thinks that they have betrayed him, by refusing to save the glass and simply returning here. Granted, he learned much of the time of the Civil War by watching through their eyes, but it is not enough. He wanted the glass restored.

The adventurers might convince Qua of their loyalty with a detailed explanation, and an



## THE SUFFER GLASS

Oratory roll. Even if he believes them, he throws them out of his tower without reward. They have failed him.

The adventurers may feel that they have a score to settle with the doctor. Qua tries weakly to summon demonic help, but his efforts with the Time Winds have exhausted him. He is not wearing his cloak, and thus cannot teleport away. He has only his demon scimitar for his defence, and is quick to surrender.

His slaves are in such a drugged state they merely watch the adventurers depart. Kindly adventurers may even wish to aid them to escape, but the slaves are not interested. They wave the adventurers farewell and return to their duties. Until the drugs wear off, at least, they are content.

There is little in the way of monetary or material rewards for the adventurers, unless they take things into their own hands. If Qua has been killed or subdued, the tower has many treasures in coin and knowledge. The amount looted is up to them, but if they take too much, the slaves begin to

get jittery about these interlopers ransacking their master's belongings, and send for help. An Insight roll can help establish this, and an Evaluate roll determines what a reasonable amount would be: per person 5,000 bronzes, one grimoire written in High Speech, and one of the V-model enchanted swords.

Finally, the adventurers must return to the Foreign Quarter through the streets of Imrryr. The *Encounters in Imrryr* table provides some sample run-ins with Melnibonéans before the adventurers are safely back at their ship or inn. Once there, they can rest at last, but their dreams that night are haunted by visions of the endless suffering of humankind.

By ensuring that the Suffer Glass remained destroyed, as decreed by history, adventurers have aided the Balance. They gain four points each in their Balance boxes, and at their individual option may also subtract three points from their Chaos boxes. ☉



# THE GHOST OF CITIES

**D**ESOLATE AND LOVELY the Ghost of Cities broods, above a plain that has never known the ravages of time. It owes fealty neither to Law nor Chaos. Only mortal creatures of the Young Kingdoms are able to enter its gates, and then only as ghosts, or in dreams.

Two sorcerers have lately come upon this city. Jaxoon D'aan, a Melnibonéan dreamer, has lost his soul to it,

becoming a ghost amongst the others peopling the Ghost of Cities. Embol Krang, an evil Pan Tangian, is clawing his way back from the living death into which his botched sorceries have flung him. The adventurers, journeying in search the dreaming D'aan, find their souls enthralled by the splendor and loneliness of the Ghost of Cities, and then imperiled by the vile Embol Krang.

## THE INVITATION

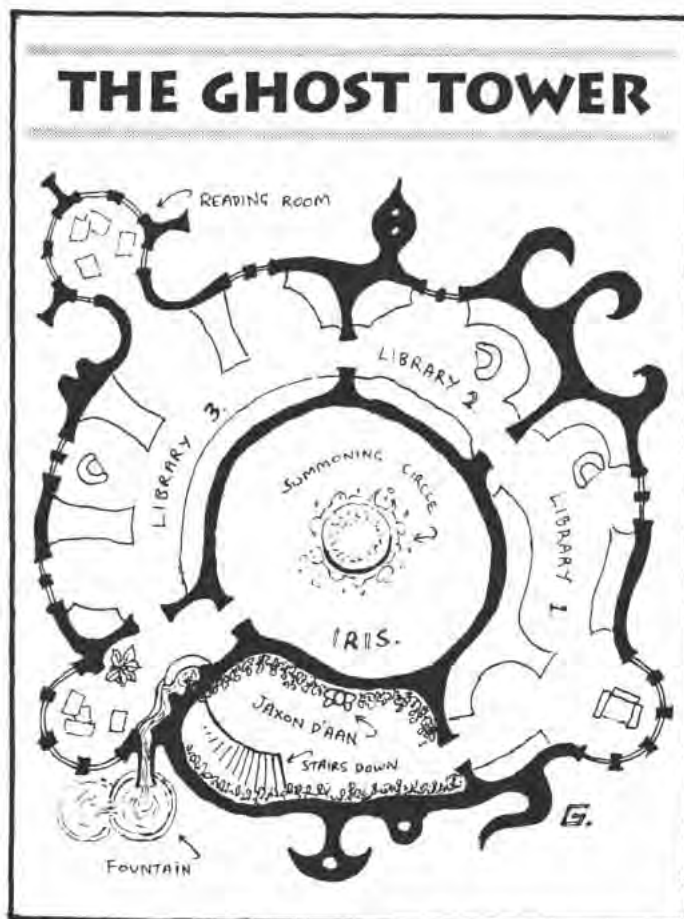
**T**HIS SCENARIO ASSUMES that the adventurers are in Imrryr. They receive a scented missive from the mistress of the Ghost Tower, the Lady Klo'astrayn D'aan. Slaves in the gray livery of the tower wait upon them that evening. They usher the adventurers into a carriage of a shimmering onyx drawn by beasts apparently carved from the same material, whose ruby eyes glint with demonic intelligence.

The coach carries them swiftly through the dark streets of Imrryr, its common slave and beast quarters, past roaming dreamers who give way before the dull flare of the team's eyes. High above, a violet and sapphire sunset tints Imrryr's delicate towers with a myriad impossible hues.

As night falls, they are lit on their way by one of the slaves, who dowses himself in sweet smelling oils and then sets himself afire, running tirelessly before the coach until they reach the tower doors.

## THE GHOST TOWER

**T**HIS TOWER IS typical of Imrryr architecture in some ways. It is tall and slender and beautiful, tapering to a spire thousands of feet from the ground. Its composition is unique. It is built of an opaque, seamless crystal. During the day, the tower seems ethereal. It



A PORTION OF THE GHOST TOWER

is solid, but no mark can be made on its substance, and no rain falls on it. It seems barely to touch this world, as unreal and lovely as a lost dream.

At dusk, the tower gains presence, and an unearthly luster. It has a definite height and breadth and is affected as normal by the elements. If the radiant walls are examined closely, human shapes seem to move inside, as if the tower were semi-transparent. However, the shadows and their actions bear no actual relationship to the dwellers within the tower.

The family within it is unusual by Melniboëan standards, in that everyone has some grasp of Common Tongue. Some years ago this skill was installed magically for their use during a masque and play, and then was forgotten. Few of consequence in Imrryr would bother to learn a slaves' argot, though its knowledge is widespread among those who must deal with humans.

## WELCOME

**T**HE DYING EMBERS OF the torch-slave are shoveled aside. Carpets of rose petals, crushed lavender, and sweet basil leaves are laid down from the coach to the door.

The adventurers are led up countless flights of stairs. Plants thrive in the stairwell, vying with each other to pleasure their senses. Fruits, variegated foliage, and flowers give off both sweet and bitter fragrances, so that the sweet never becomes cloying, and no single scent dominates. These calculated blends create exquisite perfumes that alternatively relax and intoxicate. When they finally reach the head of the stairs, the adventurers feel refreshed rather than exhausted. The tower's planner apparently had a subtle and harmonious mind.

On the final floor, creepers, flowers and patterned leaves cover the walls in living tapestries. Stingless velvet bees compete with miniature hummingbirds for their nectar.

A successful Search roll notes a Melnibonéan standing amid this vegetable splendor. He is an older man, flaccid-faced and unmoving. Creepers grow over him, and a pair of emerald and sapphire hummingbirds nest in the crook of his elbow. He is breathing but otherwise unresponsive. The slaves do not remark upon him, and usher the adventurers onwards.

They pass through a series of libraries, with high shelves and long reading tables. Each table is lit by a candle floating in a bowl of water lilies. The libraries are filled with works almost exclusively botanical, dealing with the vegetation of all the planes which the Melnibonéans have ever inhabited, visited, or speculated about. There is a small section devoted to the complex etiquette of Imrryr, and another devoted to sorceries.

A Melnibonéan boy is here, goggling at the pictures in a book on succubi. Two great red, misty eyes, hovers protectively in the air over its charge. The boy is A'ARY, and the floating eyes belong to his demon, Fidelak. Interrupted, he rudely orders the adventurers away. If they disappear immediately, he forgets them. One word, or any tendency to linger, and he remembers them. The later consequences of this are dire.

### A'ARY

A'ARY is Klo'astrayn's son, a pallid thirteen year old. His mother dresses him in the costliest fashions which he rapidly reduces to comfortable, dirty rags.



THE SLEEPER IN THE FLOWERS



A'Ary is reckless, quarrelsome, and self-absorbed. He rarely considers the consequences of his actions. He is a bully, and has the makings of a fine sadist (although the word has a different meaning in Melnibonéan society).

Fidelak is the only creature to attract the passionate affection he otherwise reserves for himself. A'Ary dotes on the monster, feeding it choice scraps for which it has no use, and claiming for it rights and privileges normally reserved for Melnibonéans. His family tolerate this, knowing that he will soon be old enough to be interested in adult occupations, and then Fidelak will be relegated to its proper place.

## A'ARY, palld 13 year-old son

Chaos 81, Balance 2, Law 9

STR 13 CON 12 SIZ 9 INT 15 POW 17  
DEX 15 APP 14 HP 11

Damage Bonus: none.

Armor: none.

Weapons: Dagger 40%, damage 1D4+2

Light Mace 31%, damage 1D6+2

Buckler 29%, kb+1D2, 15 HP.

Spells: Liken Shape (4), Summon Demon (1).

Skills: Climb 62%, Common Tongue 30%, Dodge 59%, Hide 53%, High Speech 5%, Jump 46%, Melnibonéan 75%, Move Quietly 64%, Potions 21%, Ride 50%, Search 44%, Scribe 20%, Swim 51%.

## FIDELAK

Fidelak is A'Ary's guardian demon. Fidelak appears as a pair of large red eyes, two yards apart, attached to a semi-corporeal wisp of grayish smoke. A Search roll notes a fine, glittering line that tethers one eye to the other. This is Fidelak's mouth. When angered, Fidelak rushes at the provoking object, and opens its mouth, which gapes four yards high and two yards wide. Within is a fanged maw, fringing a golden gullet that leads to a spinning void.

Fidelak acts to protect the family, in particular A'Ary, whom he shadows as a normal child would be accompanied by a devoted pup.

## FIDELAK, mostly invisible guardian demon

STR 30 CON 30 SIZ 30 INT 9 POW 12  
DEX 14 MOV float-7 HP 30

Damage Bonus: +3D8

Abilities: Void Gullet, at 80%, anything swallowed by Fidelak falls into the void, and is lost.

See, at 150%.

Armor: none, but is immaterial, affected only by demon or enchanted weapons.

Need: Pant like a dog.

Magic Point Cost to Summon: 37.

## THE MEETING

**B**EYOND THE LIBRARIES is a botanical laboratory several stories high, whose roof can evidently open, like a great petalled iris, into the sky.

The lady Klo'astrayn is in the Iris, together with Theese and Mariad. Klo'astrayn is completing a simple but rather absorbing experiment. Theese is watching in admiring indolence. Mariad is taking notes in a manner neither scientific nor particularly methodical, pausing in her writing to make helpful asides, such as "What was that phrase again mother?" and "Could you spell that please?"

## THE LADY KLO'ASTRAYN D'AAN

Klo'astrayn is the Mistress of the Ghost Tower. She is as slender, remote, and typically Melnibonéan as her dwelling place. She is 39 years old. She wears elegant clothes of gray and muted green.

Klo'astrayn is wise, courteous, and soft-spoken, although her genuine indifference to the common run of humanity makes her appear vague. She spends most of her time absorbed in her studies, still recovering from the deep hurt that her father's departure eight years ago inflicted on her.

## KLO'ASTRAYN D'AAN, Mistress of the Ghost Tower

Chaos 150, Balance 135, Law 34

STR 11 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 19 POW 27  
DEX 17 APP 19 HP 13 MP 27

Damage Bonus: none.

Weapons: none.

Spells: Bonds Unbreakable (3), Bounty of Straasha (4), Flames of Kakatal (4), Gift of Grome (4), Heal (2), Liken Shape (4), Make Fast (1), Make Whole (3), Moonrise (1), Summon Demon (1), Summon Elemental (1), Undo Magic (1-4), Visage of Arioch (1-3), Wings of Lassa (4), Wisdom of Slortar.

Skills: Aesthetics 90%, Art (Compose Verse) 82%, Common Tongue 45%, Control Children 35%, Craft (Gems) 97%, Evaluate 79%, Glide Soundlessly 85%, High Speech 21%, Listen 47%, Melnibonéan 145%, Million Spheres 15%, Natural World 149%, Potions 96%, Ride 60%, Scent/Taste 77%, Scribe 70%.

## MARIAD

Mariad is Klo'astrayn's fifteen year old daughter. Her resemblance to her mother is striking. She wears a flowing dress of emerald green. Her earrings, necklace and belt are of jade, hung with small, sweet-tongued bells. She wears wreaths of fresh flowers in her hair. She restlessly braids flowers and leaves together whenever she has nothing better to do.

Mariad is less intelligent and more self-absorbed than Klo'astrayn, with the supremely thick skin of a confident teenager. Mariad is as hurt by her mother's lack of interest in her as Klo'astrayn was by Jaxoon's. A lot of her actions stem from this, as she attempts to attract and hold on to her mother's attention. Her relationship with Theese is in part a product of this, in part a desire to prove herself better than Klo'astrayn, and part a working out of adolescent rebellion. Genuine love for Theese is not really present. Her elders indulge her in this flirtation.

## MARIAD, stormy 15 year-old daughter

Chaos 68, Balance 11, Law 9

STR 14 CON 12 SIZ 11 INT 16 POW 23  
DEX 15 APP 17 HP 12

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Armor: none.

Weapons: Shortsword 63%, damage 1D6+1+1D4

Dagger 45%, damage 1D4+2+1D4

Buckler 72%, kb+1D2+1D4, 15 HP

Spells: Bounty of Straasha (4), Gift of Grome (4), Liken Shape (4), Moonrise (1), Summon Elemental (1), Visage of Arioch (1-3).

Skills: Boss Slaves and Siblings 90%, Common Tongue 15%, Conceal Object 39%, Craft (Braid Flowers) 87%, Dodge 64%, Dote on Parent 56%, High Speech 5%, Listen 19%, Melnibonéan 80%, Move Quietly 53%, Natural World 31%, Potions 14%, Ride 40%, Scent/Taste 37%, Search 42%.



LADY KLO'ASTRA YN'S EXPERIMENT GOES AWRY

## THEESE

Theese is extremely pale, an appearance he fakes with cosmetics when necessary. He is the most fashionable of the menage-a-trois, and takes pride in maintaining an air of extreme lethargy and complete indifference.

Theese is an intelligent, passionate man with an inquiring mind and enthusiastic nature, which constantly breaks through his attempts at composure. He is deeply attached to Klo'astrayn, but shows no outward sign of affection. He regards Mariad as an amusing diversion.

### THEESE AX'AF, LAQUID LOVER

STR 13 CON 10 SIZ 15 INT 18 POW 22  
DEX 15 APP 20 HP 13 MP 22

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapons: Rapier 47%, damage 1D6+1 +db

Dagger 42%, damage 1D4+2+1D4

Armor: 1D6-1 (no helm), quilted doublet.

Spells: Bounty of Straasha (4), Flames of Kakatal (4), Gift of Grome (4), Heal (2), Hell's Razor (1-4), Moonrise (1), Summon Demon (1), Summon Elemental (1), Tread of Cran Liret (1-4), Undo Magic (1-4), Ward (3), Wings of Lassa (4), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3).

Skills: Adore Klo'astrayn 90%, Common Tongue 35%, Dodge 35%, Entertain Mariad 75%, Evaluate 69%, High Speech 50%, Instruct A'ary 45%, Listen 69%, Melnibonéan 115%, Million Spheres 19%, Move Quietly 70%, Natural World 75%, Potions 137%, Ride 60%, Scent/Taste 65%, Search 65%, Scribe 84%.

## THE EXPERIMENT

NONE OF THEM FOR the moment notice the arrival of the adventurers. Klo'astrayn has conjured forth a plant elemental in a three-yard-wide scrolled, silver petri dish in the middle of the chamber. A thick vine, it is growing supernaturally fast, whipping violently about in semi-sentient growth. It sheds clusters of fruit that are propelled around the room by its thrashing, and prove to be black seed pearls the size of raisins (worth 50 bronzes apiece).

A slave trots forward to announce the adventurers, and unwittingly scuffs one of the protective lines chalked onto the floor. The animate plant seizes and crushes him. The supernatural force within evidently freed, the vine dies as rapidly as it grew, flopping down into a pulpy black mass that rots all over the floor. Slaves scurry to clean the mess, which gives off a putrid stench quite out of keeping with the heady, gracious perfumes of the rest of the tower.

Klo'astrayn is put out by the untimely interruption of the unfortunate slave, more for the failure of her experiment than for his death. Theese applauds languidly. Mariad bossily recruits the adventurers to collect the scattered pearls. An adventurer can find 1D6 of them with a successful Search, and pocket them with a Conceal Object roll.

Only after a considerable period of time, or after the adventurers explain the reason for their presence, do the

family actually take any notice of them. Klo'astra yn sighs for the mistake, whilst her daughter points out comfortingly that humans are impossible to tell apart. Klo'astra yn then graces the adventurers with her presence, leading them to divans in another part of the Iris.

Deserted by her mother again, Mariad restlessly braids flowers and leaves together until Theese claims her attention. The discarded wreaths are picked up by slaves and used to decorate the supper dishes.

## AT KLO'ASTRA YN'S PLEASURE

**S**LAVES BRING REFRESHMENTS of spiced wine vinegar and oysters, each oyster rimmed with gold dust, and each containing a pearl worth 500 bronzes. Klo'astra yn refreshes herself by dissolving the pearls into her wine and drinking them. She is amused by any adventurer faux pas during this light repast. For instance, an adventurer might pocket the pearl, choke at the unexpected bitterness of the wine, or actually eat the oyster. As a polite host, she disregards all but the most oafish of table manners.

Klo'astra yn begins to tell the adventurers what she expects of them (see Conversation with Klo'astra yn, below). However, as she does so, the other residents of the Ghost Tower make their boredom known.

## THEESE AND MARIAD

Midway through the conversation, Theese and Mariad decide to disport themselves in the original corner of the Iris. If any of the adventurers are noticeably distracted by this, Klo'astra yn asks her lover and her daughter to leave, as she would prefer the visitors concentrate on her conversation.

## A'ARY

A'ARY wanders in, followed as always by Fidelak. He rudely butts in on the conversation, complains to Klo'astra yn that he is bored, and sneers at the adventurers ("They look like something that would interest Prince Elric"). Any snappy comeback ensures that he persecutes them later. Fidelak reacts

to any extreme rudeness, and must be brought to heel by Klo'astra yn.

Klo'astra yn indulgently listens to A'ARY, and after her first suggestions are dismissed as even more boring (read a book, summon a demon, supervise the slaves), she arranges for him to be taken to a place of interest. Mariad promptly complains at this favorable treatment, and the two bicker whilst Klo'astra yn attempts to conclude the conversation with the adventurers. Finally, she sends them off together, something which pleases neither. They are still arguing they exit.

## THEESE AGAIN

Theese, deprived by Mariad's departure of his preferred activity, saunters over and listens in on the rest of the conversation. He attempts to conceal his interest.

## CONVERSATION WITH KLO'ASTRA YN

**K**LO'ASTRA YN ASKS A slave to bring in her father, who proves to be the creeper-wrapped man from the foyer. Another slave carries the hummingbird nest, which is carefully placed in a large aviary at one end of the Iris. The parent birds swirl anxiously around in a blur of living colors.

## THE STORY OF

### KLO'ASTRA YN AND JAXOON

She begins by giving the adventurers the poem just below. It is written in Melnibonéan. She comments, "For years my only conversation with my father was in poems that we would leave for each other to find, written words that were more beautiful, more sublime, than anything we could say. The last poem he wrote for me was this."

*Friend, why so restless? Whither must you wander,  
Since mortal venture only serves to feed the worm.  
As a wave that has roamed the wild waters over  
Dies choked on sand, mired in the slow earth's tomb.  
Since this is so, why seek your lost endeavor,  
Why journey far and fruitless? Rest your head.  
And be at last at peace, all troubles over,  
In these last lodgings of the restless dead.*

"A few nights later he was gone," she says, and then checks herself, "Or rather, he was like this . . ." She gestures to the silent figure of Jaxoon. "And he has been ever since. Eight years now. But on the same night our tower was transformed, and since then it has been as it is now, a building of ghosts and mist."

She is most distressed by this, as she loves her father, and now he has gone from her. After years of research, she thinks that she knows what happened, and how to return him to his former state.

Jaxoon was an accomplished dreamer, a weaver of visions. On one of his mystic journeys he came across a place he called the Ghost of Cities. Although this city could only be visited in dreams, it was changeless and eternal. He became fascinated with it, and would spend long periods of time there, sunk in a drugged stupor. In a poem he wrote about it, he said that it was peopled only by ghosts and that its buildings were alive.





Evidently, she says, he decided to bring forth one of the buildings of the Ghost of Cities to Imrryr, the Ghost Tower. Unfortunately and equally evidently, the Ghost of Cities exacts its own equilibrium. In bringing forth the building, he left his own ghost behind, and he is now a soulless mute.

With this knowledge, she and Theese created an artifact known as the Soul Noose, which allows the wielder to trap souls. Theese was able, after a number of false starts, to concoct a dream drug that allowed entry to the Ghost of Cities.

Klo'astra yn then administered the drug to twenty slaves, with instructions to take the Soul Noose to the place in the Ghost of Cities where the Ghost Tower once stood, and where, presumably, her father's ghost is bound. Jaxoon's soul would be trapped by the noose and an equal weight in souls (of the slaves) left to maintain the balance. Jaxoon would thus be returned to her.

The slaves were supposed to awaken months ago. They have not done so. Their tardiness has stretched from being unforgivable to unnatural. Eleven have died. The remainder have now been removed from the dream drug, but have not woken. They are evidently unable to return. The leader of the slaves, Depus, last night became curiously afflicted, totally transparent, and the Soul Noose, which was in his keeping, likewise. Finally alarmed, she thought to recruit the adventurers. Here she ends her history.

Klo'astra yn's search is spurred on as much by her desire to repay the hurt in full, by baffled affection, as by her professed eagerness to make good his loss. The hurt is as great as the love she still bears him, and it is for this reason she is not interested in going to the Ghost of Cities herself, or sending fellow Melnibonéans. She considers the whole effort of such an expedition demeaning, and no true expression of filial love. Insight rolls may grant some clues to her decision.

## JAXOON D'AAN

Jaxoon's handsome face is left ugly for the lack of any animating spark. He stands and breathes, but otherwise his body remains in any position it is placed. He is dressed in a grey shift.

Jaxoon was a remote, dispassionate man, more interested in mystic visions than the mundane life of Imrryr. His rare affections were indulged by his daughter, but his soul was moved more by poetry than physical appetite. Through his life he gradually became more detached, particularly after the death of L'lea, Klo'astra yn's mother. Finally he decided to depart it altogether, and inhabit the Ghost of Cities. He trusted to his daughter the care of his trifling mortal remnant in the Young Kingdoms, and knew that he would be giving her the Ghost Tower in any case. He thought that this would soften the blow of his rejection.

## JAXOON D'AAN, THE SLEEPER IN THE ROSES

Chaos 233, Balance 160, Law 51

STR 13 CON 12 SIZ 13 INT 26 POW 26  
DEX 12 APP 16 HP 13

Damage Bonus: +1D4.

Weapon: none.

Armor: none.

Spells: Bonds Unbreakable (3), Bounty of Straasha (4), Flames of Kakatal (4), Gift of Grome (4), Heal (2), Liken Shape (4), Make Fast (1), Make Whole (3), Midnight (1), Moonrise (1), Refutation (1-4), Soul of Chardros (1-3), Summon Demon (1), Summon Ele-

mental (1), Undo Magic (1-4), Visage of Arioch (1-3), Ward (3), Wings of Lassa (4), Wisdom of Stortar (1-3).

Skills: Art (Compose Verse) 82%, Common Tongue 30%, Evaluate 99%, High Speech 55%, Listen 97%, Melnibonéan 145%, Million Spheres 30%, Natural World 128%, Potions 116%, Scent/Taste 100%, Scribe 134%, Search 95%.

## THE ADVENTURERS' TASKS

SHE ASKS THE adventurers, whose souls are sturdy and untainted by will-sapping drugs as are those of Melniboné's human slaves, to go to the Ghost of Cities, find the slaves, recover the essence of the Soul Noose, and finish the task. Returning to their place of entry with her father's soul is sufficient to return them to this sphere.

Klo'astra yn also prizes Depus for his loyalty, much as a human prizes a favorite dog, and she values his return.

## PHANTOM ROSES

As an afterthought she mentions that her father once wrote a piece of doggerel, concerning a flower that has aroused her botanical interest. She has no other clues to this flower, but asks that if the adventurers have time, they could keep a look out for them, and gather them for her.

*Only the eye of death discloses*

*Where twine and suckle phantom roses.*

*Pluck these flowers with mortal breath,*

*But only with the clutch of death.*

## REWARDS

KLO'ASTRA YN DOES NOT propose a reward, and is somewhat taken aback if the adventurers ask for one. She thinks of humans as beings who do what she wants for the pleasure of serving her. After some thought she says they could take items from the family treasure vaults, or that she could arrange an audience for them with someone of the inner circle of the Court.

She sends them with some slaves to tour the vaults if they doubt her. The treasure rooms are splendid, brimming with enchanted and demonic weapons and armor, and all sorts of artifacts of fine Melnibonéan make. She allows the adventurers to nominate their own rewards, with a ceiling of 20,000 bronzes worth of equipment for the entire party. Everything is worth twice as much as the prices listed in the rulesbook, because of the superb workmanship. Evaluate rolls assist in selecting the finest pieces.

## SETTING OFF

THE ADVENTURERS ARE stripped of their clothing by slaves, bathed, laved with rare soaps and anointed with costly unguents. Their hair is cut and nails trimmed. Their clothes and possessions are brought back to them, thoroughly cleaned and repaired, and they are led into the vault, as behind them the slaves frantically scour and cleanse the rooms where the hirelings have left their dirt.

## THE ADVENTURERS' SLAVES

One slave is to accompany each adventurer. The slaves are uniformly attractive, although their faces are dulled and

vacant. All are addicted to soul-sapping drugs, and require daily doses from a chest of drugs to entrusted to the adventurers.

The drugs make them want to serve the adventurers to the best of their ability, although it also makes them move slowly and languidly and destroys their initiative. They act as if immune to physical pain. They can go without food, water, and sleep for extended periods of time, and without impairment of their work, as long as they maintain their drug intake.

The slaves are accustomed to the genteel pace and utter luxury of lifestyle practiced by the Melnibonéans, and seek to pamper their new masters. They know great shame is if unable to obey an order, and each without fail calmly offers to commit suicide in compensation for such failure.

## SLAVES FROM THE GHOST TOWER

	JEM	TORGRIM	WYLDNA	PERENTHE	CALLUM
STR	12	12	12	12	11
CON	16	15	17	12	10
SIZ	14	13	11	12	12
INT	13	11	12	11	14
POW	6	5	7	6	8
DEX	11	12	10	9	8
APP	18	18	18	18	18
HP	15	14	14	12	11
MP	6	5	7	6	8
DB	1D4	1D4	None	None	None
Sex	Male	Male	Female	Female	Male
Age	23	18	32	13	47

Armor: None.

Weapons: None.

Skills: Climb 40%, Common Tongue 45%, Craft (Serving) 80%, Melnibonéan 50%, Move Quietly 40%, Natural World 10%, Potions 10%.

## THE SLEEPING SLAVES

Like Jaxoon, the ten slaves remaining of the original rescue party are lax and unresisting. Their only movement is the regular rise and fall of their ribs, their only sound their sonorous breathing. They lie pillowed in fragrant cushions and covered with shimmering silks. Their bodies are insubstantial during the day, becoming solid and radiant with the glow of the Ghost Tower at night.

Depus, the leader slave, in whose slack grasp rests the Soul Noose, has become ethereal at all times, a shimmering inconstant outline. Nothing in this world can affect him, or the precious Noose—a shadowy, triple-stranded torque of silver, diamonds, and black opals.

## THE SECRET OF THE SLAVES

Normal dreamers in the Ghost of Cities are more real than ghosts, and the substance that remains in Imrryr reflects this. The slaves have been ensorcelled by Embol Krang, whereas Jaxoon made a unique bargain with the city, and thus his mortal remains do not fade. Furthermore, the slaves have fared worse in their long slumber than the more magically resistant Melnibonéan. Their ribs, skulls and pelvis jut painfully, and pressure sores are opening, despite the constant attendance of other slaves who nightly bathe and shift them, and feed them meat broths and pureed fruit.

## ENTERING AND LEAVING THE CITY

THE PROCESS IS complicated, as is evidenced by the years of effort it took to discover. The Ghost of Cities is normally entered only by the dead. Under certain circumstances, accomplished dreamers, or others assisted by powerful sorceries, can enter.

The essence of all artifacts in contact with the dreamer's bodies are transferred to this place with them, with one major prohibition. No otherworldly creatures can visit there, no demons and no elementals. Klo'astrayn has tried, and all bindings were broken. If the adventurers attempt to take such to the Ghost of Cities they are freed en route, and do not appear there.

It seems that the Ghost of Cities is inhabited only by human or near-human souls, and some force keeps all other life aspects out. She thinks this is because it is the echo of some lost civilization that owed fealty to neither Law nor Chaos, and even in death bars them entry.

## THE ADVENTURERS EMBARK

THE GOODS THAT ARE piled in reaching and touching distance around the adventurers are far more than they could possibly need, including a jewelled chest of spices and drugs that would fetch 25,000 bronzes in the Young Kingdoms.

Goods to be carried by the slaves include a pavilion and fittings, carpets, rope, oil lamps, wine and foodstuffs, silver filigreed eating and drinking vessels, and a brass astrolabe and sextant. They also have opulent and useless trinkets such as perfumes and herbal sachets, musical instruments, and bejewelled tent pegs.

When everyone is settled, These hands round a steaming, amber stirrup cup. It contains a creamy, pungent, smoking liquid. Pleasant herbs have been added, that imperfectly mask the bitter aniseed of the dream drug, brewed from the herbs sleepwell, fennel, and valerian. Adventurers have to succeed in a CONx5 roll to induce themselves to swallow it. If they fail they retch the liquid up, and must try again.

## ENTERING THE CITY

ADVENTURERS INGESTING THE drug experience a blinding flash that turns into a vivid hallucination. They find themselves falling very suddenly toward swiftly rising ground, which shifts bewilderingly as they approach. As they tumble, they glimpse towers, roofs, bridges, and canals cloaked in a bright yet hazy mist. Despite the speed of their descent each lands with no more than a slight bump. They have fallen asleep without realizing it, and into the lap of the Ghost of Cities.

If the first adventurer looks up, the following adventurer appears as a black pin-prick in the sky, a tear in reality that swells and ebbs in size, growing larger as it drops. The fallen is hopelessly and constantly contorted, at one moment all feet and hands, and the next a swollen face attached to a shrivelled bladder of a body. It is as though the Ghost of Cities were viewing them through a distorting prism, and struggling to fit their shape into the scheme of things. As they drop further



# THE GHOST OF CITIES

their shape becomes constant, until their feet touch the ground and they become normal.

Adventurers who take the drug together appear in the same place in the city. Those who succeed in Luck rolls land on the ground. Those who fail end up somewhere inconvenient, on a roof, stair or dome, up a tree, in a canal, or within a nearby building, from where they must make Climb or Jump rolls to rejoin the others.

Adventurers who failed to ingest the drug at first must wait for Theese to brew up another batch. They appear in another part of the city, at a distance of 1D8 miles from the others, and must work their way through with successful Navigate or Track rolls, until they reach parts or people that they know.

The slaves' first actions on arrival are to offer the adventurers refreshments, while they set up the pavilion to mark the entrance point to the waking world. Its bright walls and banners flutter inconsequential amid the enduring grandeur of the Ghost of Cities.

## REALITY

**D**ESPITE THEIR SOMEWHAT outre entrance, reality is the same for the adventurers here as elsewhere. If they die, they're dead; their dreaming body is cut off from its soul, and both perish. If the dead adventurer can make a Luck roll, he or she remains here eternally, a shade among the rest, haunting the Ghost of Cities.

## THE SEARCH

**T**HE ADVENTURERS MAY vary their activities according to the time limit they have set themselves, and the players' perceptions of their tasks. What follows below is a description of the important encounters, and a likely scenario. Individual gamemasters must juggle events to suit their players interest and initiative.

Finding the single vacant plot of land that marks the Ghost Tower's original site within the endless maze of buildings is next to impossible, without knowledge of the city or a guide.

Track rolls find evidence of the earlier band of slaves, close to the adventurer's point of entry. These can be followed to the environs of the Shadow Tower, where all traces vanish as the tainted surrounds mislead and confuse the search.

Other information must be garnered from meetings with the other inhabitants of the Ghost of Cities.

## THE GHOST OF CITIES

**T**HE CITY SPREADS AS far as the eye can see in all directions. Towers, spires, palaces, temples and squares are joined by bridges, arches, esplanades, stairs, lane-ways, and columned parades, and laced with dry canals. Statues and dead trees stand rank on rank down the eminent avenues, and dot the squares and gardens. Around the greater buildings stand the remnants of formal



THE GHOST OF CITIES



gardens. Shrivelled stalks stand mute testament to former forests of flowers. Dried leaves hang listlessly from withered bushes, waiting for a wind that will never blow again to set them free.

The city glows in a tranquil light, yet is cloaked with a bright, hazy mist that conceals as much as the light reveals. This mist is strongest at noon, when visibility is reduced to 100 feet, and dissipates at night. Through the mist, glorious shafts of light fall, pin-pointing a spire here, and there washing a wall with gold. With dawn and dusk the mellow rays touch the eternal city a moment with mortality.

The buildings are of no particular time or place, or, more correctly, of every time and place. All have architectural merit. The adventurers are struck by this architectural confusion, and by the strength, simplicity, or beauty of the individual buildings. It is as though the city were a resting place of architecture, and the final proof that every great building gains a soul.

The city is empty of people. No one dwells in these vacant shells, and no one gathers in its public places. The Ghost of Cities is beautiful but it is unspeakably lonely and sorrowful. Buildings are created to house people, and they mourn the loss of their inhabitants.

As living visitors move through this city, the dull air quickens. The buildings soften their facades in welcome, and seem to entreat entry. The dead trees stir a little, as for a moment sap runs in them, and they reach their branches higher and prouder, saluting. The city hungers for human souls. The longer the strangers stay, the more radiant it becomes. It catches at their memories of buildings where they have been

happy, and recreates them in glimpses down side alleys. It changes the echoes of their voices into greetings from friends long dead, and promises of eternal peace.

## THE LONELY CITY

THE LONGER THE ADVENTURERS stay in the Ghost of Cities, the more insistent its siren song becomes, until it becomes a gentle murmur forever in their minds, a call for them to die, and be sundered from it never more. Jaxoon heard this call, but Melnibonéan and accomplished dreamer that he was, he was able to cheat both death and separation, becoming one with the Ghost of Cities whilst remaining alive. The adventurers may not be so lucky. For each visit, they must make a POW roll on departure, starting with POW x10, and decreasing by 1 multiplier for each successive visit. If they fail this roll, they do not wish to leave.

The Ghost of Cities should be constantly evoked to remind the players of the supernatural background to their adventuring. But it should not be allowed to take over the foreground adventure. The adventurers have no influence over it. They cannot even map its entirety because it is infinite, and their players may only be bored by long narrative descriptions in which they have no part.

## INHABITANTS

GHOSTS INHABIT THIS place, people who have hearkened to its call and dwell in peace here. Many eventually become one with their beloved city, and lose all remembrance of themselves. This is the city's ultimate blessing. Some hungry souls seek Tanelorn here, even in death, but cannot find it. Travelers or malingerers, ghosts of mortals are generally invisible to mortal dreamers. They become visible at odd times during the night, and at that time they can be trapped with the Soul Noose.

The adventurers meet 1D6 ghosts on any one night. These visions last for 1D10 rounds, in coincidental freaks of time which enable the living and dead to see each other.

Ghosts are ethereal and radiant. Their faces are engrossed and their eyes filled with visions of splendor. They dress in the fashions of all ages and places. They walk blithely through humans and walls, unless delayed with successful Oratory, when they perceive the dreamer. Those met near the Shadow Tower flee unless Fast Talked into staying, for they have learnt to fear capture by Embol Krang.

The converted regard strangers with kindly eyes, and beseech the adventurers to join them and revel in the dead city's splendor. When this invitation is refused, they shake their heads sadly, with ghost tears tricking from their faces.

Those seeking Tanelorn question the dreamers eagerly about that fabled city. Some seekers may not realize that they are dead, and on being informed that they are spirits they flee, shrieking, in the realization that now they will never find content.

Once the adventurers refuse the invitation to join with the city, or admit that they do not know of Tanelorn, the ghost departs. Departure can be delayed if players are cunning in the phrasing of their questions and answers. But ghosts become insistent towards the end of the time they are allowed, and soon drift away and vanish.

### GHOSTS ENCOUNTERED

1D20	Ghost
1	Maron*
2	Sulvi*
3	Smaul*
4	Arlan*
5	Moku
6	Arwill
7	Pikil
8	Varn
9	Only
10	Ankharon
11	Dantik
12	Relloric
13	Korel
14	Brangym
15	Estercion
16	Semalla
17	Hilva
18	Merik
19	Benon
20	Fruppli

*\*these four ghosts are fully detailed. Other ghosts are only sketched briefly.*

## THE KNOWLEDGE OF GHOSTS

Conversation ranges over the varied personal histories and goals of the ghosts, the Ghost of Cities, visiting dreamers, and the effects of Embol Krang on the city.

**THE SHADOW TOWER:** Most ghosts know the location of the Shadow Tower, and its effects on the Ghost of Cities. Some warn the adventurers not to go there, but others implore them to rid the city of the abomination, as it is destroying them and altering the peaceful mood of the Ghost of Cities to one of terror. As ghosts, they cannot harm the Shadow Tower or its mortal denizens.

The Shadow Tower is close at hand. The adventurers need only question two ghosts with this knowledge to be directed to its darkness-tainted environs, 1D3 days' journey from their original position.

**THE GHOST TOWER:** few ghosts know the place where the Ghost Tower once stood, although some recall seeing a Melnibonéan dreamer in the city. It takes the adventurers 1D6 nights of journeying and successfully questioning ghosts to discover the tower's site by themselves, as each ghost is able to direct them a little further in their search.

**THE MISSING SLAVES:** some ghosts saw Depus and his procession of slaves wandering through the city. None have seen them for a while, and when last seen the mortals were heading westward, where the Shadow Tower lies.

## FOUR GHOSTS

### MARON

Maron appears as a small man in his mid-thirties, wearing sailor's garb. In life he was a sailor from the Purple Towns. His speech echoes nautical parlance even in death. He slew himself when lost at sea, fearing to be press-ganged into Pyaray's foul fleet if he drowned. For this act he gained the shelter of this place, "where there is no more sea," he says sadly. A wide-traveled soul, he discusses the architecture with authority, wondering at the wide range encompassed by the Ghost of Cities, and guessing at the reason.

Maron knows of the vacant plot where the Ghost Tower once stood, because it is the only bare patch of ground in the city. He has seen a dreamer there, a Melnibonéan.

**MARON, ghost of a sailor**

INT 12 POW 17

### SULVI

Sulvi appears as a woman in her late twenties. She carries herself with a dignity born of the trials she has undergone.

After a hard, unwillingly adventurous life, Sulvi was captured and cruelly slain by the sorcerers of Pan Tang. By force of will she found peace in the Ghost of Cities. She seeks to be at one with the city, and implores others to join in the rest that she has gained. She is visibly disturbed if questioned on her life, as her receding memories awake. She flees prolonged questioning.

She has seen the Shadow Tower, and fled in terror, knowing its origin and history from her time on the Demon Isle. She saw a face in an upper window, as of a dreamer imprisoned there.

**SULVI, ghost of a slave**

INT 14 POW 16

## OTHER GHOSTS

**MOKU, ghost of a hunter**

INT 14 POW 11

**ARWILL, ghost of a merchant**

INT 16 POW 13

**PIKIL, ghost of a madman**

INT 8 POW 18

**VARN, ghost of a craftsman**

INT 13 POW 12

**ONLY, ghost of a nomad**

INT 12 POW 15

**ANKHARON, ghost of a sorcerer**

INT 19 POW 23

**DANTI, ghost of a warrior**

INT 11 POW 12

**RELLORIC, ghost of a troubadour**

INT 15 POW 14

**KOREL, ghost of an artist**

INT 17 POW 14

**BRANGYM, ghost of a blacksmith**

INT 12 POW 12

**ESTERCION, ghost of a king**

INT 14 POW 13

**SEMALLA, ghost of a gossip**

INT 13 POW 10

**HILVA, ghost of a murderer**

INT 9 POW 8

**MERIK, ghost of a physician**

INT 15 POW 12

**BENON, ghost of a prophet**

INT 17 POW 15

**FRUPPLI, ghost of a fool**

INT 13 POW 13

### SMAUL OF NADSOKOR

Smaul appears as a small, filthy wretch, with no hands and blood blisters oozing all over his body. His age is impossible to guess, but he is either very young or very old.

Smaul defied Urish, King of the Beggars, by championing Tanelorn, a place of which he knows nothing except that it offers peace. He was first mutilated and then put to death for his impiety. Even in death he seeks the shelter of the Eternal City, although now he can never go there.

**SMAUL OF NADSOKOR, ghost of a beggar**

INT 10 POW 13

## ARLAN

Arlan appears as a well-built, well-fed, grandly dressed member of the free and easy aristocracy of Jharkor. A ghostly gem fashioned into the Arrow of Law dominates his costume.

Arlan is an amiable young chap with flexible morals. He hails the adventurers, seeking to know what city he is in, and

how he reached it. A recent arrival, he can tell the adventurers little. He was murdered in an attack on the Temple of Law in Dhakos, and is yet to realize that he is dead. Unknown to him, the Lords of Law have rejected his soul as not law-abiding enough, and he has been cast from their protection, finishing up in the Ghost of Cities.

If any of the adventurers are women, Arlan gallantly offers them a rose, as he has seen the most beautiful roses growing hereabouts. However, once he realizes that he is dead, he is more stunned than anything else, and wanders away, "to have a bit of a think." The adventurer must then find and pick her own ghost roses.

**ARLAN, ghost of an aristocrat**

INT 15 POW 14

## GHOST ROSES

*Only the eye of death discloses  
Where twine and suckle phantom roses.  
Pluck these flowers with mortal breath,  
But only with the clutch of death.*

**PHANTOM ROSES** are scarce. They grow in the graveyards of the Ghost of Cities, and only ghosts can see them. Like the ghosts, they are invisible, except for rare conjunctions of the twin realities of the Ghost of Cities.

To approximate the rarity of the coincidence required, ghost roses become corporeal to a mortal searcher only if he or she receives a successful POW x1 roll whilst searching at night. The roses are semi-corporeal, and can only be gathered for 1D10 rounds before they disappear again.

They have the sure, sweet, scent of rain-washed roses, and their location can be determined by a Scent/Taste roll, even if the searcher can neither see nor touch them. This fragrance lingers supernaturally long in the memories of those who experience it. It is a strong aid to memory. Those making a Luck roll recall a pleasant scene from the past, those failing remember something horrendous.

Mortals can easily distinguish the flowers from the dead vegetation by looking through the eyes of a skull. Those searching with such an aid need only successes in Search and Natural World, trying once every four hours. They can pick them only whilst looking through their viewing aid. Otherwise the roses are invisible and incorporeal, although they can still be smelt.

Anyone in the moment of death can also perceive phantom roses, blooming all around them in heady luxuriance.

Phantom roses climb and ramble over monuments, statues, walls and occasionally engulf entire buildings. There is only ever one plant in one location. They are ethereal and radiant, silver-hued. Their wraith-flowers turn towards any living soul that approaches them. Their leaves twitch, and their tendrils move slyly in the adventurer's direction.

The roses can be safely picked only by using a dead limb, or, again, by someone dying. They can be carried by a dead limb but die within hours. If plucked by someone mortally wounded, they take psychic root in the person's dying soul, and flourish for years, requiring no other nourishment.

Ghost roses are vampiric. If deliberately plucked by the living, they attempt to take root in that person's soul. The roses have a POW of 3D6, and must overcome the victim's POW on the Resistance Table. If they succeed they take root, and drain 1 point of POW per day. Such a person is saturated with their spectral perfume, and the roses are visible to them at all times. When the host's POW reaches zero he or she dies, and the rose blooms.

A bush will only attack a particular person once. Ghost roses cannot spread into the soul of someone who does not wish to pluck them. Any POW lost to the roses is permanent, even if their graft is removed.

## THE FAMILY'S ATTENTION

**W**HILE THE ADVENTURERS wander in dreams, the real-world inhabitants of the Ghost Tower begin to take an active interest in their fate.

### MARIAD'S ADVENTURE

**M**ARIAD DECIDES TO take a look at this place that everybody is making such a fuss about, in another attempt to attract the attention of her mother. She steals some of the dream drug from Theese, and pays a visit. Her father's daughter, she falls in love with the Ghost of Cities as well, however her healthy level of self-interest keeps her from wishing to stay there.

Evidence of Mariad may be found. A Track roll uncovers the footprints of a slim female, and an Idea roll reminds the tracker that ghosts leave no trace, but mortals do. A Search roll discovers some dead flowers woven together, and an Insight recalls Klo'astrayn's daughter doing this when she is bored or lonely. A Listen roll may hear her singing as she goes.

If the adventurers actively seek Mariad, then at some point they find her, or vice versa ("Yoo hoo! Hullo everybody!"). She assumes command of the expedition, bosses everyone about, teases the ghosts, sulks, attempts to go off by herself, and otherwise behaves like a spoiled child. Despite her faults, she is a competent and confident warrior, and does not hesitate to draw weapons and wade into combat if the opportunity should arise.

If they do not seek her out, or even actively avoid her, then at the gamemaster's option she becomes bored and leaves, or else falls into the clutches of Embol Krang. If the latter occurs, the adventurers may discover clues of a brief battle and abduction, with scattered braids of knotted vegetation strewn amidst severed zombie hands and



noses. Scuff marks lead west from the scene, towards the Shadow Tower.

## A'ARY'S REVENGE

**A**'ARY TOO IS BORED, and has no outlet for his tedium save the sleeping forms of the adventurers. He amuses himself in harmless diversions, such as trailing someone's hand in a bowl of warm water in an effort to stimulate the emptying of the bladder, shaving a head in a comic pattern, stripping another naked, or swapping around their possessions. None of this has any bearing on their wanderings through the Ghost of Cities, but may cause them some discomfort on waking.

Adventurers who angered or belittled him are subjected to particularly malicious tricks, such as minor torture to the extent of a 1D6 hit point loss. Those failing a Luck roll receive a scar which subtracts one point from their APP.

A'ary knows that his mother will be displeased if he causes the adventurers any grievous harm, even though they are only humans. As it is, he blames his petty crimes on one of the other slaves, and volunteers to conduct the flogging himself.

## JAXOON'S PREOCCUPATION

**T**HE SITE OF THE ABSENT Ghost Tower can be found via the directions of ghosts. The plot where the tower once stood is rough and blackened, as if plowed, by Jaxoon's repeated attempts at poetry. Jaxoon's spirit sporadically appears at the site of the Ghost Tower, troubled by the poem's inadequacies.

Dug into the earth is the following:

*I dwell in the city of my dreams, my ghostly vision  
Although in another place my mortal husk draws breath.  
Step through Tanelorn's gates oh stranger and be merry,  
The glory that you seek lies mute in death.*

The word *I* has been scratched out, and *You* tentatively substituted. Above *my dreams* is written *Yours, whose?* Beneath the last line is another note, *mute in the jaws/maw of death???*

Owing to the unique bargain he has stuck with the Ghost of Cities, Jaxoon's ghost has particular powers. He is able, of his own will, to maintain his visibility. He is free to travel anywhere within the city.

Jaxoon's face is as calm and radiant as his fellow ghosts. He is supremely content and has no wish to return to Imrryr. He is surprised and amused if adventurers think to tell him their story, although he prefers to discuss the problems of his incomplete poem. It is his 500th attempt, and he still has not succeeded in perfecting the metaphor.

He attempts to evade capture by the Soul Noose, vanishing if the adventurers persist. He cannot retreat to his body without the adventurers returning his ghost to Imrryr via the Soul Noose or one of Embol Krang's bottles.

**JAXOON D'AAN'S SOUL, the dreamer in his dream**

INT 26 POW 26



WHERE TWINE AND SUCKLE PHANTOM ROSES

# EMBOL KRANG & HIS SHADOW TOWER

**A**ROUND THE SHADOW TOWER for almost a square mile, the Ghost of Cities has been warped. The splendid boulevards and palaces have been replaced by the architecture of fear, buildings shaped by twisted genius to inspire loathing, awe and hatred. In the Young Kingdoms these structures are mostly found in Hwamgaarl, and include temples, jails, abattoirs, and other palaces designed to crush the human spirit. Shadows of these buildings now surround the Shadow Tower.

On the fringes, the buildings mix with the normal architecture of the Ghost of Cities. Adventurers who make repeated visits to this area become aware that it is growing slowly and slyly, warping the other buildings, expanding outward like a cancer.

Within this quarter, the lane-ways are narrow, cramped and sinister, winding secretively between houses whose overhangs block out the sky. Many of these lanes lead to the Shadow Tower, even those that seem at first to lead away. The houses creak furtively, and their windows are small and shadowed so that nothing can be seen within. Vile stench well from them. The atmosphere becomes claustrophobic and threatening. The gentle mist becomes an ominous miasma, and sunset and sunrise drench everything blood-red. The more impressive buildings loom threateningly and abruptly through the fog, their facades denying escape, promising retribution.

The ghosts that inhabit them are shades or victims of evil, who gloat over the adventurers, knowing that they are doomed.



A successful Navigate is required to escape from this area once it has been entered, into the saner air of the greater City. Finding the Shadow Tower also requires a Navigate roll, or bullying some poor ghost into revealing its location. Sooner or later, but surely, it will find them.

If the adventurers are inclined to be paranoid or suspicious of each other, now is the time for the gamemaster to provoke them further. If they are speaking to each other, and fail their Listen rolls, twist their words to fuel their suspicions and hatreds. Invoke the feeling that they are being watched and smirked over, perhaps by their so-called friends. Once they have left this part of the city, this feeling ceases.

## THE UNHAPPY HISTORY OF EMBOL KRANG

**O**NCE A POWERFUL sorcerer, Embol Krang in his hubris sought to better the Melnibonéans, and gain control of Stormbringer and Mournblade. He failed and found himself cut off from aid on the Shadow Plane, the resting place of those two swords.

His great powers and skills are just sufficient to ward off the demon godlings that roam that dreadful place. Trapped in the Shadow Plane, and surviving only within the small space protected by his demon wards, Embol Krang became an accomplished dreamer. He stumbled across the Ghost of Cities, and eventually was able to conjure forth a dream of his tower.

Here he dwells, returning only to his Shadow Plane prison for one hour in twenty-four, to attend to his failing body's needs and to maintain the wards that alone protect him from the horrors Beyond. The ethos of the Ghost of Cities allows the Shadow Tower admittance for its complete adherence to its charter, and its presence warps the City.

Embol Krang has thus endured two centuries alone. He is now a twisted shrivelled lich-like creature, his powers supernaturally extending his life as he flails about, with increasing desperation, for escape. His hatred for beauty and his powerful ego mean that he rejects the death-lure of the Ghost of Cities. He has gained power over souls and ghosts in a way similar to that of an ordinary sorcerer's power over demons and elementals. He can bind them and control them.

When the Melnibonéan slaves came looking for their master, He tricked and trapped them, and forced their story from them. A Melnibonéan dreamer, a powerful sorcerer, in the same predicament as himself--truly the gods have finally seen fit to release him from this hell! Krang will not believe that someone would willingly come to this place, and even if Jaxoon tells him so assumes only that the other is bluffing, or seeking some advantage by saying so, and does not really mean it. The arrival of the slaves incidentally fixed his other problem. He has found a way to bring them more fully into the Ghost of Cities and deny their owner a chance to remove them from his power. Now he can experiment on them, and use their mouths to let the dead speak.

He has used the technique on Depus to obtain the Soul Noose. He similarly ensorcelled one slave for each day forward from this, until all are in his power.

Embol Krang's triumph is in the inventive use to which he has put the Soul Noose. He sends Depus out to trap ghosts,



who are then forced into carcasses of the slaves. This is the only time he allows the Soul Noose to leave his person. He kills the slaves first to ensure the compliance of the ghosts. He questions the resultant zombie, seeking information on the layout of the city and the former location of the Ghost Tower and its owner. His needlessly brutal methods have worked against him, as the ghosts, trapped and despairing but strong-willed, have united in refusing to give the information he seeks.

He created ten corpses inhabited by ghosts, before it occurred to him how wasteful the procedure was. Now he uses the zombies as ceremonial guards to his tower when they are not answering his questions, and has refined his technique to the point where he uses the same carcass to question a number of ghosts, ousting one as he traps another. He intends only using another of his limited supply of slaves when the body falls apart. He does not free ousted ghosts but keeps them in glass bottles, in case he needs to question them again.

In this way he has acquired a thorough knowledge of the nearer parts of the City, shown in a large map on the walls of the Summoning Chamber. If this map is stolen, or examined with a successful Memorize, the adventurers no longer need to Navigate rolls while searching the Ghost of Cities.

## EMBOL KRANG

Embol Krang lives only through the force of his will. His long, scanty hairs are combed across his blotched, balding head, and fall about a face whose notable features are his huge nose, sunken cheeks, and palsied grin. His fingernails and hair are long and filthy. He is emaciated and crooked, and twisted about himself until his face seems a grinning skull, nodding and eager in its palsy, even when Embol Krang is enraged. When angry or happy, he dribbles.

In his new morbidity he wears a shroud encumbered with grave mould. The Soul Noose, heavy and opalescent, sparkles around his withered, bowed, neck.

Embol Krang is quick-witted, powerful, and mean-spirited. He excelled in the devious internal politics of Pan Tang, and is unlikely to be caught out by relative novices such as the adventurers. He seizes the initiative where he can and reacts quickly when he cannot.

In his necromantic solitude Embol Krang has lost most of his ability to deal with the living, becoming a necromancer almost by default. If he has extended conversation with the adventurers, he becomes unsure of himself—their free wills challenge his dreary existence. Really he would be happier if they were dead, and he able to pull them at will in and out of his horrible bottles.

Embol Krang's chief method of defence is a pre-arranged order with his followers to shield his body with theirs. He then flees into his own body on the Shadow Plane.

## EMBOL KRANG, VILE SORCERER OF PAN TANG

Chaos 291, Balance 38, Law 90  
 STR 9 CON 30 SIZ 8 INT 21 POW 30  
 DEX 11 APP 3 HP 19  
 Damage Bonus: none.  
 Weapon: none.  
 Armor: none.

## SOUL ENTRAPMENT

**THIS SPELL IS ENACTED** on a dreamer or ghost, at a cost of 1 POW to the spell-caster, and a successful POW:POW roll. It takes three melee rounds to cast. The caster must have both hands free, complete concentration, and the soul being bound must be visible to the caster.

It ties the soul to the sorcerer's whim in the Ghost of Cities. The bound soul can take no physical action against the sorcerer, and must obey his orders. The victim's sleeping body in the Young Kingdoms becomes permanently ethereal, and cannot be affected, although its silvery outline can be seen, and it retains a slight resistance.

The entrapment spell can be learned or reversed if a sorcerer with a Million Spheres of 20% or more examines Embol Krang's notes for at least one week, and then receives a successful D100 roll. The spell only works in the Ghost of Cities.

Embol Krang can also drain power from ghosts for his own use, as a punishment, or to kill. He uses POW on a point for point basis, and can also convert 10 POW points drained from a target into 1 point of personal CON. This is the way he maintains his vitality.

**Spells:** Bonds Unbreakable (3), Hell's Hammer (1-4), Hell's Razor (1-4), Midnight (1), Muddle (1), Pox (1), Refutation (1-4), Soul of Chardros (1-3), Soul Entrapment,\* Summon Ghost,\* Undo Magic (1-4), Ward (3), Wisdom of Slortar (1-3), Witch Sight (3).

\* these spells work only in the Ghost of Cities.

**Skills:** Common 105%, Conceal Object 76%, Dodge 35%, Evaluate 76%, Fast Talk 78%, High Speech 50%, Listen 56%, Madden 105%, Melnibonéan 95%, Million Spheres 68%, Move Quietly 146%, Natural World 30%, Oratory 34%, Potions 82%, Scribe 214%, Search 88%, Subdue Ghost 76%, Torture Ghost 89%.

## THE DREAM OF A SORCERER

**EMBOL KRANG SPENDS** most of his time in his tower. On rare occasions he ventures out at night with a retinue of five zombies, taking a stroll and enjoying the atmosphere.

Embol Krang acts in a friendly manner if met peacefully. He initially sees the adventurers as trapped souls like himself, eager to be used to find release. However his natural Pan Tangian assumptions of superiority and brutality are likely to stand in the way of any permanent alliance.

If Embol Krang catches Jaxoon, the two equally stubborn, quarrelsome, and powerful souls rapidly reach an impasse. Jaxoon refuses to do anything for Krang whilst trapped in a bottle or human corpse. Krang has nothing to bargain with, as Jaxoon does not want to leave the Ghost of Cities. Conversation between the antagonists consists of icy repartee, with occasional lapses into incoherent raving on the part of Embol Krang.

The adventurers inadvertently break this impasse by introducing Mariad. Once Embol Krang finds out who she is and gets her into his power, he ensorcells her soul, turning her Young Kingdoms body translucent and untouchable. Jaxoon agrees to aid him for the sake of his daughter, although a veil had best be drawn over the grotesque scenes which then ensue,



now that the Pan Tangian has two helpless Melnibonéans in his power.

Working together the two sorcerers take one month to liberate Embol Krang from the Shadow Plane. The Shadow Tower returns in triumph to Hwamgaarl, a great evil released into the waking world. It is unlikely that Krang would free either Jaxoon or Mariad. Even on his return to the Young Kingdoms, he would doubtless find some way to take their souls with him, and enjoy their suffering.

## EMBOL KRANG'S DEATHLY HORDE

Their armor is a dream of Embol Krang's former ceremonial guard's armor. Embol Krang has decorated this armor by entrusting it with grave-mold and cobwebs. The ghost-zombies keep a constant, whispered plaint to be released. If a zombie is destroyed the ghost bound within is freed, and vanishes laughing and singing for joy.

	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8
STR	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
CON	16	15	17	12	16	15	17	12
SIZ	14	13	16	12	14	13	16	12
INT	7	5	8	5	7	5	8	5
POW	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
DEX	9	8	8	7	9	8	8	7
APP	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3
HP	15	14	17	12	15	14	17	12
MP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
DB	1D4	1D4	1D6	1D4	1D4	1D4	1D6	1D4

**Weapon:** Heavy Mace 35%, damage 1D8+2 +db

Half Shield 35%, kb+1D2+db, 15 HP

**Armor:** Dream Armor (1D6)

**Spells:** none.

**Skills:** Common Tongue 10%, Moan Beseechingly 45%.

## DEPUS

Depus is a sallow, short, thin man with a neatly trimmed black beard and moustache. His face is as calm and vacant as the rest of the slaves, and his movements equally unhurried. His eyes retain the spark of intelligence and cunning.

He wears the gray sheath-cloth of slaves of the Ghost Tower, ornamented by silver embroidery and buckles to mark his higher status. His only weapon is his platinum fruit knife, which doubles as a lock-pick, stone-from-hoof remover, nail trimmer, grout cleaner, oyster opener, and musical instrument.

Depus is imperturbable (he calls his current situation 'somewhat awkward'), and has a deadpan, cynical sense of humor, such that it is often hard to work out if he is joking. His loyalty is to the family of the Ghost Tower. If he can find a way to rescue Jaxoon, he will, even at the cost of his own soul. He relies on his rescuers, and takes drastic action only if they fail.

Embol Krang occasionally sends Depus out into the Ghost of Cities in search of fresh souls. For each day the adventurers spend in the Ghost of Cities, they have a 10% chance of encountering Depus and his band of zombie retainers. Within the half day's journey that encompasses the area infected by the Shadow Tower, the chance to encounter Depus increases to 25%.

Depus hails the adventurers in a friendly fashion, explaining his situation as rapidly as possible. If there are a small number of adventurers, and he thinks the zombies will overwhelm them, he advises them to give themselves up. If there is a large band of adventurers, he leaves it to them to decide on their actions. His zombies, moaning their ceaseless plaint, attack if

the adventurers seek to fight, and herd them to the pens of the Shadow Tower if they flee or elect to be arrested. Embol Krang then interviews them.

Depus only suggests plans if the adventurers are stuck, or if the gamemaster wishes a voice in the proceedings. If Depus is killed, he becomes a ghost, and may be communicated with at some later date.

## DEPUS, head slave

**Chaos 66%, Balance 49%, Law 59%.**

STR 16 CON 14 SIZ 12 INT 15 POW 13  
DEX 16 APP 15 HP 13

**Damage Bonus:** +1D6.

**Weapon:** Fruit Knife 41%, damage 1D4+1D6

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** none.

**Skills:** Art (Juggle) 66%, Climb 53%, Common Tongue 75%, Craft (Serving) 90%, Dodge 67%, Exhibit Guile 75%, Melnibonéan 50%, Move Quietly 83%, Natural World 20%, Potions 20%.

## THE OTHER SLAVES, ten survivors

STR 12 CON 12 SIZ 12 INT 11 POW 10  
DEX 13 APP 13 HP 12

**Damage Bonus:** none.

**Weapons:** none.

**Armor:** none.

**Spells:** none.

**Skills:** Common Tongue 55%, Craft (Serving) 60%, Dodge 30%, Melnibonéan 30%, Move Quietly 40%, Natural World 10%, Potions 10%.

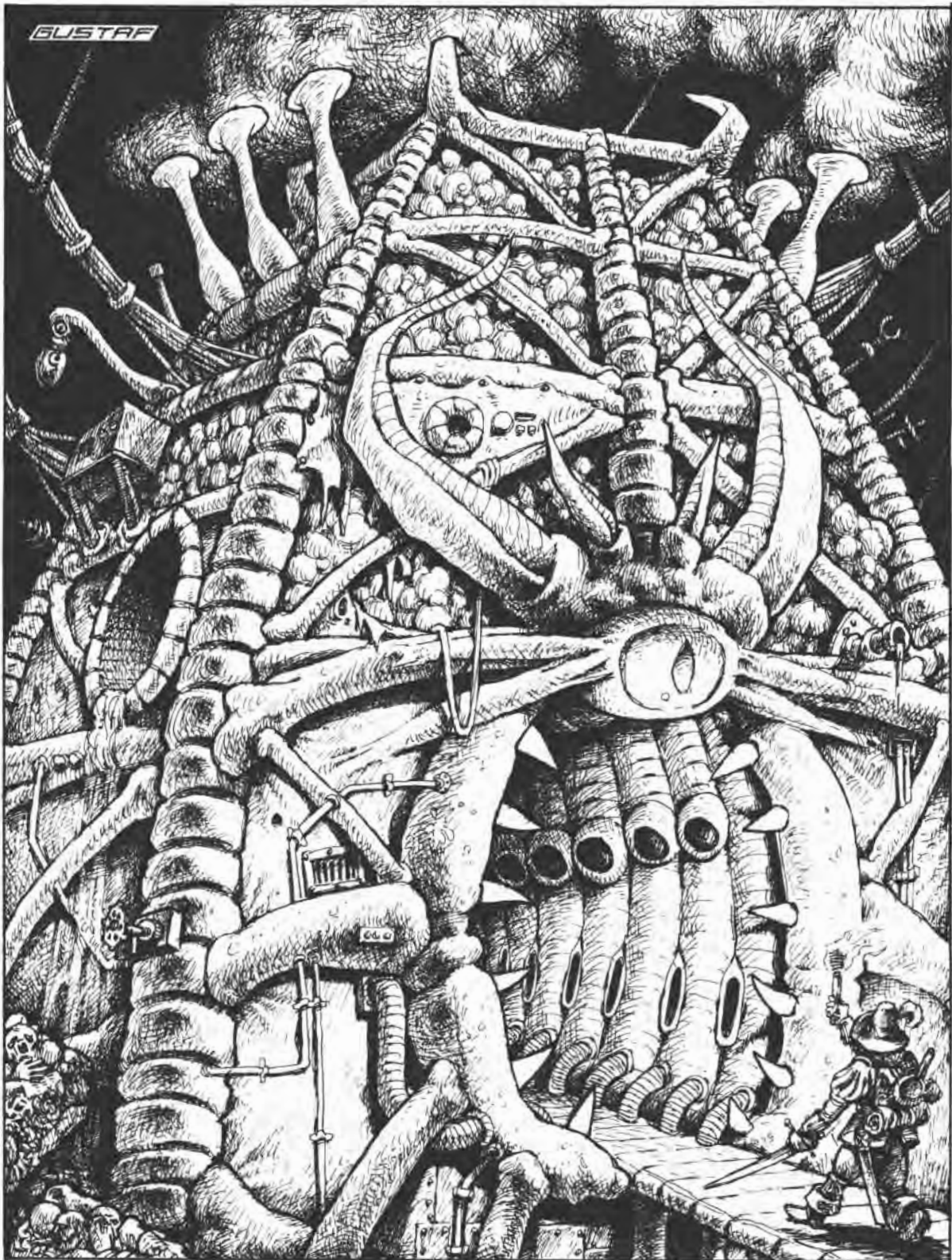
# THE SHADOW TOWER

**T**HE SHADOW TOWER is the essence of the architecture of Pan Tang—short, squat, ugly, spiked, and designed to look malevolent. It achieves the last effortlessly. Its shadow is cast in Hwamgaarl, not here.

The Shadow Tower of Embol Krang is one of the high points of any tour of Hwamgaarl, and any adventurer familiar with that baleful city recognizes its outline. The tower itself no longer exists in Pan Tang. On a successful Young Kingdoms roll, adventurers recall that the tower was thought to be destroyed two centuries ago, together with its builder Embol Krang, in a failed attempt to summon the blades Stormbringer and Mourblade to the Young Kingdoms.

There are four stories above ground and a myriad, mostly unused, below. The tower has only one ground floor entrance and no windows or roof entrance. Its outer walls are thick and strong, festooned with a grim panoply of spikes, hooks, and skull-carvings.

# THE GHOST OF CITIES



THE SHADOW TOWER



## SUB-BASEMENTS

**F**ORMERLY THE SLAVE pens, torture chambers, and prisons of the Shadow Tower in its hey-day, these sub-basements are now a maze of empty, ink-black chambers.

## BASEMENT

**T**HE BASEMENT CONTAINS the slave and zombie pens. Depus is allowed his freedom, and has a bed in a slightly more comfortable corner, although he is locked in the basement with the rest when their master returns to the Shadow Plane. Depus has the most freedom of any of the slaves and is consequently the most closely watched. Embol Krang has taken all their gear for his own use.

Embol Krang assumes the slaves of Melniboné are like those of Pan Tang, ruled by fear. However the drugs and lifestyle of Imrryr softens their servitude, indeed make many love it, and some revere their masters. Unknown to him Depus, as a leader slave, accustomed to organizing and running Klo'astrayn's estates, has a certain tolerance to the drugs, and a cunning and astute mind. He is playing along with the Pan Tangian, intending to rescue his master when the time comes.

Embol Krang's routine suspicions mean that whenever he sends Depus afield he sends half his zombie force with him, but he has no particular suspicions that his slave is not as obedient as the rest, if a trifle more useful.

## GROUND FLOOR

**T**HE DOORWAY IS PURE Pan Tang, with the typical archway motif of skulls and crossed scythes of the worshiper of Chardros. The knocker is the head of a leering demon, but the demon it once bound has gone.

If adventurers knock, Depus opens the door and after his initial surprise, ushers them up to Embol Krang. If they

break in, they must make a successful Pick Lock roll, or a STR roll against STR 50 of the door. Breaking through the door causes enough noise to ruin any element of surprise.

## ENTRANCE

The Tower of Embol Krang exists partly in three places, Hwamgaarl, the Shadow Plane, and the Ghost of Cities. These can be glimpsed as the adventurers pass through the archway, although only the tower in the Ghost of Cities is actually entered. The first glimpse is of the Shadow Plane, a churning maelstrom in which vast, horribly vague, shapes lurk. Second is a glimpse of Hwamgaarl at night, and the distant sound of a roaring tiger, almost as horrible.

Finally it settles into the entrance of the Shadow Tower, a series of plain, deserted kitchens, empty quarters for the more important slaves, and the ante-chambers of the tower. The wall niches once contained Pan Tangian treasures, but are now decorated with skulls and patterns of bones. Embol Krang has dug up piles of skulls and bones from the cemeteries and despoiled catacombs and arranged his charnel plunder artistically around the place to make it seem more homely. The tower air is dry and earthy.

## UPPER FLOOR

**H**ERE ARE EMBOL KRANG'S bed chambers and the living quarters of the tower. Zombies guard it, mindlessly mimicking the actions they performed in life.

Unless invited in, the adventurers need to sneak through here. If spotted, the zombies rush them, moaning their ceaseless plaint, "I am Rayne of Argimiliar, remember me." "I do not choose this, forgive me." "Lorgem-Til-Nio, I was a king of Tarkesh once." "Kill me. Kill me." They attack as they have been ordered, and fight to their full ability, although their dead eyes beseech forgiveness. If the adventurers are invited guests, the zombies shuffle around ignoring them.

## TOP FLOOR

**T**HIS IS WHERE EMBOL KRANG spends most of his time. The central Summoning Chamber has doors to the Sigil and Bottle Vaults, and an archway covered with a gently undulating curtain, which leads to the Shadow Plane.

Roll 1D100 to determine where Embol Krang is when the adventurers arrive:

01-30	Sigil Vault
31-60	Bottle Vault
61-90	Summoning Chamber
91-00	Shadow Plane

If he is in the Bottle Vault, the noise made by the trapped ghosts covers any noise the adventurers make. If he is on the Shadow Plane, the adventurers have an hour or less before he returns, and he will not return there a second time until 24 hours have elapsed. If he is in the Summoning Chamber, they cannot go further without him detecting them.





## THE SUMMONING CHAMBER

This central room is used by Embol Krang as a zombie interrogation chamber. It is a bare room whose marble floor is engraved with now-useless diagrams and the geometric shapes of sorceries, and studded with empty candle holders. A map of the parts of the city that he knows is pinned to the south wall.

An altar to Chardros the Reaper, patron of Pan Tang, is in the center of the chamber. It has been converted to a zombie restraining device, with the addition of some straps of leather reinforced with bronze. An inert cadaver lies on the slab, an empty vessel for possession by Krang's bottled ghosts.

Next to the altar is an incense holder, and a bottle rack. The final item of furniture is a reading stand, so that Embol Krang can refresh his memory whilst swapping ghosts, or recite the incantations necessary to enforce his will on a surly newcomer. The three items are of rich materials but their decorations bear the taint of Pan Tang, with recurrent motifs of torture and despair.

## THE SIGIL VAULT

This is Embol Krang's library, and anywhere else it would be priceless. It is filled with grimoires, including some lost in the two centuries since his disappearance, and some that were rare then. It is now useless, for demons are barred from entry to the Ghost of Cities.

It is a musty room filled with shelves, stacked books and manuscripts, a large desk and several chairs. An engraving of the Eight Chaos Lords of Pan Tang dominates the east wall. Their eyes follow intruders around the room.

## THE BOTTLE VAULT

Here are kept ghosts whom Embol Krang has trapped and stuffed into glass bottles. Each bottle sealed with red wax on which he has written the name and title of the shade imprisoned within, eg., *Tyrol of the Court of the Yellow King*, *Mayna of the Purple Towns*, *Ynith of Lormyr*, etc. The chamber is filled with an intense aura of despair and anguish, radiating from the icy containers. With a successful Listen roll, faint screams can be heard en masse, pleading for release.

Close examination of any bottle (successful Search) notes the trapped wraith within, a grey roiling mist with a pleading face and hands pressed against the glass. Breaking the bottle or the seal frees the ghost, who rapidly fades from view, laughing and singing for joy.

The noise of the vault changes if Embol Krang is present. The bottled ghosts hiss at him, chanting defiance. They are stilled only by his glares, and wild threats to drain them of power and feed them to the demons on the Shadow Plane.



EMBOL KRANG AND HIS HORRIBLE BOTTLES

## ENTRANCE TO THE SHADOW PLANE

THE CURTAIN LIFTED, this room opens into the Summoning Chamber on the Shadow Plane. The entrance shimmers like a heat mirage although it is cold, and touching it fills the adventurer with dread. Beyond can be clearly seen the sleeping undead, Embol Krang, surrounded by his wards. The walls of the tower on the Shadow Plane do not exist. Instead the walls are of the seething, shadowy chaos of that Plane, from which demon faces chuckle and leer, pressing themselves against the magical walls before being swept away by the chaos currents that perpetually eddy there.

The undulations of the curtain follow the movement of restless air that actually resists the dreamer leaving the original chamber, and does not allow the passage of missiles or other weapons. Living matter must receive a successful Resistance Table roll of STR:STR 15 to pass through this barrier (except for Embol Krang, who built the barrier and passes through without problems, becoming a specter on the other side). By passing from the dream Shadow Tower the dreamer has left the protection of the Ghost of Cities. When that happens, roll Luck. One of the following happens.

If the roll succeeds, the dreamer's soul is instantly snapped back to wherever his or her body is. Adventurers wake back in Klo'astran's vaults, in Imrryr.

If the roll fails, the dreamer's soul is on the Shadow Plane with no physical body. The dream-body they left in the Ghost of Cities vanishes. The adventurer cannot return. They can possess Embol Krang's body without a POW roll, as its soul is absent. Once encased in Embol Krang's slimy and dissolute flesh, the adventurer lacks the knowledge to get out of it.

Embol Krang's real tower is similar to the dream tower, save for the wards and the Shadow Plane surrounding it, and the lack of any inhabitants. There is a greater clutter of artifacts, as Embol Krang only brings those he needs into the ghost-tower, in an attempt to spare his powers. There are many bottles, of all sizes and shapes.

Destroying the wards destroys the Shadow Tower, Embol Krang's body, and the adventurer's spirit. The adventurer dies immediately, devoured by ultimate Chaos. Krang dies once the twenty-three hours he has before he must return has elapsed. His animosity towards any remaining adventurers in the interim is extreme. The dream-Shadow Tower and its surrounds stays whatever the outcome, having acquired a legitimate foothold in the Ghost of Cities. The taint simply does not spread any further.

If not destroyed, within 24 hours or less, depending on the time of day, Embol Krang is going to return for his one hour's penance, and want his body back, on a POW:POW Resistance Table roll. Two souls cannot possess one body, and the loser of this psychic combat is dispossessed. Embol Krang's anger at the adventurers' trespass ensures that he attempts to bottle them for interrogation. As long as their souls remain alive until the time set aside for their drugged stupor elapses, they can return safely to Imrryr.

## THE SPIRIT OF THE GHOST OF CITIES

**I F THE ADVENTURERS** foil Embol Krang, the Spirit of the Ghost of Cities manifests to them, and tells them anything further that they need to know.

Either the facade of a grand building transforms itself into a building-like countenance and speaks, or the adventurers seemingly swing up into the sky, and they see, laid out below them, the Ghost of Cities become a giant stony face. Either manifestation speaks in a voice like the clashing of stone and ringing of trumpets. Sustained conversation is deafening.

The Spirit tells them that they have altered the fabric of the City, halting its evolution from a place of peace to one of terror to those restless souls who inhabit it. Although becoming a place of terror would have been a nice change, the adventurers have nevertheless performed a significant action in stopping the slide, and in return it offers those rewards within its power.

## THE SOUL NOOSE

**THE SOUL NOOSE** is a weighty, iridescent, triple-stranded torque of silver, diamonds, and black opals. It has a value of 25,000 bronzes for its metal and gems, and double that for its sorcerous powers.

The essence of the soul noose is tied to the person who holds it in the waking world. If removed from their possession it fades from the Ghost of Cities within the hour, unless it is bound to the city with Embol Krang's soul entrapment spell. If this spell is cast upon it, it remains in the Ghost of Cities, regardless of who holds it. Its waking world counterpart becomes ethereal at all times.

The Soul Noose can only work on a ghost visible to the wielder. It must come in contact with the spirit, most often looped around their neck, whilst the wielder holds onto it in two places to complete the circuit. A POW:POW Resistance Table struggle then occurs. More than one person can hold onto the noose and combine their POW in the attack, if they know the Chain of Being spell.

If the spirit's power is overcome, the Soul Noose absorbs it. Embol Krang and Klo'astrayn both know how to loose a captured soul back into a body. If the spirit wins, it flees. If the wielder fumbles the POW roll, the Soul Noose absorbs their soul instead.

It grants a spirit-guide to the location of the Ghost Tower and Jaxoon's soul, or knowledge of the location of ghost roses, or anything within its power that the adventurers request. It has little power outside its own realm and cannot help them there, except to return them immediately to the waking world.

If the adventurers have done all their tasks, then the Spirit has nothing to offer except its recognition of their deeds. It also promises that for those who wish it, and who acknowledge no other gods or who forswear them, that upon death they will rejoin the Ghost of Cities in its eternal slumber and delight.

## RETURN TO IMRRYR

**I F RESCUED, JAXOON** behaves in a way understandable only to those who have also lost their heart's desire, mitigated a trifle if the adventurers rescued him from Embol Krang's clutches. Once his soul is rejoined to his body, he stalks off in a tremendous, silent rage. Klo'astrayn is untroubled by this, and smiles tranquilly at his rescuers. If there is a hint of satisfied malice in her look, it is of no concern to theirs.

Now that the task is done, Klo'astrayn recovers from her hurt, and to Theese's delight takes a renewed interest in life. Jaxoon vows vengeance on those who tore him from his beloved city, but finds himself again absorbed in his family. If Mariad enjoyed her experience with the adventures, she acquires a taste for wandering, which alone may save her from

# THE GHOST OF CITIES

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Imrryr's final doom. The family force A'Ary to apologize for his persecution.

The Ghost Tower is restored to its former appearance, a tapering gray tower of pleasant form, but without the unearthly translucence and beauty imbued upon it by Jaxoon's bargain with the Ghost of Cities.

Klo'astrayn is able to remove any ghost rose intrusion into an adventurer's soul after 1D6 days of study. She offers to buy such a person first, as a valuable and interesting species of root-graft, and at a price ranging from 10,000 to 100,000 bronzes, depending on their condition. She can revive Ghost Roses plucked with a dead limb, as long as the roses reach her

within the day. She devotes considerable time to creating prisms, windows or viewing apertures from the necessary ingredients, so that the phantom roses can be admired by the living.

If he survives, Depus takes on his duties where he left them. He supervises the opening of the family vaults, and allows the adventurers to choose their reward. He remains a friend for life, and in his capacity as an honored slave can aid the adventurers in many ways. However, once the adventurers have left the tower, all further encounters with Klo'astrayn are met with only a smiling but vague recollection that they once served her well. ☉





# INDEX

## A

A'sha'hian 7, 16, 70  
 Actorios 48  
 Actorios, The 22, 27, 29, 48  
 Aesma 26, 50  
 Amashii 12, 18  
 Arena of Lost Souls 15  
 Argimillar 12  
 Arioeh 7, 9, 12, 26 - 27, 29, 42, 47, 50  
 Arkyn 76  
 Amara 26, 50  
 Aubec 10

## B

Bakshaan 12  
 Balaan 26, 50  
 Balance, The 7 - 8, 16, 47, 50  
 Balo 50  
 Barrier of Law 48  
 Battle-barges 10  
 Bay of Imrryr 14  
 Beast- and Plant-Lords 7, 9, 10, 45  
 Boiling Sea 12 - 13

## C

Catacombs, The 26  
 Cathedral of Chaos 25, 50  
 Chaos 7 - 10, 16, 25, 28, 32, 37, 47 - 48, 50 - 51  
 Chaos Fleet 51  
 Chaos Wars 8  
 Chardros 26, 50  
 Climate of Melniboné 12  
 Common Tongue 37  
 Corridor of Kings 28  
 Court of the Ruby Throne 28  
 Courtyard of Crystallized Stars, The 27  
 Courtyard of Hands, The 27  
 Cymoril 12, 27, 43 - 45

## D

Damizhaan 8  
 Dead Gods, The 8, 17

Dhakos 20  
 Dharijor 25  
 Dharzi, The 10, 19  
 Diavon Slar 42  
 Disordered Scribes of the League of Tumultuous Erudition 65  
 Doctor Jest 25, 32, 46  
 Doomed Folk, The 7  
 Dorel 12  
 Dragon Caves 17, 27, 88  
 Dragon Falls 15  
 Dragon Goad 89  
 Dragon Horn 17, 89



Dragon Saddle 89  
 Dragon Sea 12 - 13, 16  
 Dragon Skeletons 27  
 Dragon Songs 87  
 Dragons 8 - 10, 12, 17, 20, 87  
 Dragons, Secret Names of 87  
 Dreaming Stones 16  
 Drugs 9, 14, 32, 34, 37 - 39  
 Dyvim Tvar 45

## E

Eagle Guard 28  
 Earl Saxif D'Aan 26  
 Elemental Court 25  
 Elemental Rulers 7, 9

Elemental Wars 7  
 Eloarde 10  
 Elric 7, 10 - 12, 17, 26 - 27, 29, 32, 42 - 45  
 Emerald Arbor, The 29  
 Emperor's Suite 29  
 Encircling Hills, The 13 - 15

## F

Fifth Plane 19  
 Fileet 16  
 Filkar 12  
 Floating Palace, The 15

Goldar 35  
 Golden Hills 12, 15  
 Golden Hills, The 12, 13, 15  
 Gratysha 26  
 Great Wall 36  
 Grome 12

## H

H'hui'shan 8 - 9, 19  
 Haborym 26, 50  
 Hall of Concordance 25  
 Hall of the Ruby Throne 28  
 Harbor 10, 24, 53  
 Harbor Edict 38  
 Harbormaster 25  
 Heir-elect to the Throne 27  
 High Speech 16 - 17, 37  
 Humans 9

## I

Ilmiora 25, 40  
 Imperial Guard 20  
 Imperial Palace 24 - 28  
 Imrryr 9, 12, 16, 19, 50  
 Imrryrian Bay 13  
 Intangible Forest, The 14, 41  
 Iron Sages of the Order of the Brass Quill 76  
 Isle of Purple Towns, The 11 - 12, 25, 38 - 40  
 Isolated Fell 12 - 13, 15 - 16

## J

Jadmar 12  
 Jharkor 12, 20, 24 - 25

## K

Kiashu 12 - 13, 17 - 18, 37, 69  
 Kri'isin'nii 71

## L

Lake of Moon, The 15  
 Lalkhu River 13 - 16, 20

Forest of Souls 42, 51  
 Future Events 11  
 Fwem-Omeyo 26

## G

Gallery of Stained History 29  
 Garden of Melancholy Roses 26  
 Gate of Bone 20, 27  
 Gate of Crystal 20  
 Gate of Flowers 20  
 Gate of Jade 20  
 Gate of the Dead 26  
 Gate Unseen 20  
 Gates of the Dead 30

Last River 51  
 Law 7 - 8, 10, 30, 39, 47 - 48,  
 50 - 51, 76  
 Lawful Barrier 10  
 Ley-lines 14, 16  
 Life Span 31  
 Lokhaghai 19  
 Lords of Chaos 26  
 Lords of the Higher Worlds  
 8 - 9, 50  
 Lormyr 10, 12, 25, 38

## M

Mabden 10  
 Mabelode 26, 50  
 Magum Colim 25, 45  
 Malohim 50  
 Mammoths 17, 19  
 Marthim 50  
 Mashabak 42  
 Meadows of Lassitude  
 12 - 13, 15 - 16, 40 - 41  
 Meerclaw 50  
 Melniboné's Formation 12  
 Melnibonéan History 7  
 Melnibonéan Language 37  
 Miskrag 19  
 Moleworms 19  
 Monshanjik 22  
 Monshanjik Tower 24 - 25,  
 36, 38, 46  
 Mordaga 47  
 Mourblade 8  
 Multiverse 17  
 Myshella of Kaneloon 10  
 Myrrhn 8

## N

Necromancy 51  
 Nihrain 8

## O

Olin 12  
 Older Ones, The 7 - 8

## P

Pan Tang 10, 39, 50  
 Passageways,  
 the hidden network 38  
 Pikarayd 12  
 Plain of Imrryr 12 - 14, 41  
 Plant and Beast Lords 7, 9,  
 10, 48  
 Potions 43  
 Potions Skill 39  
 Prince Carolak 26  
 Prince Gaynor the  
 Damned 47  
 Processional Avenue,  
 The 24 - 25  
 Pyaray 26, 50 - 51

## S

Sack of Imrryr 12  
 Sadric 11, 28 - 29, 32,  
 41 - 43, 45 - 46  
 Scroll of Dead-Speaking 42  
 Sea Serpents 16  
 Sea-serpents 13  
 Shazaar 26  
 Ship Which Sails Over  
 Land And Sea, The  
 8, 12, 30  
 Sighing Desert 9, 12, 25  
 Silent Land 8  
 Silver Grimoire 8, 29  
 Slaves 9, 13, 15, 22, 32, 34,  
 38 - 40, 50



## Q

Quarzhasaat 9, 12

## R

R'lin K'ren A'a 7, 9  
 Religion 26  
 Ring of Kings *see* *Actorios*  
 Rituals 28  
 Ruby Throne, The 28  
 Runeswords 8

## T

Tanglebones 43  
 Tarkesh 12  
 Theocrat of Pan Tang 10, 42  
 Three Day War 9  
 Tower of B'al'nezbett 29  
 Tower of D'a'rputna 27  
 Tower of Kings 28

## U

Ufych-Sormeer 12

## V

Verdele 26, 50  
 Vilmir 12, 76  
 Vilmire 12  
 Vlaihuan2-19  
 Voroon4-50

## W

Wa'aiya'oro 12, 17 - 19,  
 37, 69  
 Wakasabi 19  
 Weeping Glade of Galith L'Ar  
 15  
 Wild Coast, The 13, 16  
 Wild Dance of Melniboné 28  
 Witch Sight 20  
 Wyrm Cove 16

## X

Xiombarg 50

## Y

Young Kingdoms, The  
 10 - 12, 25  
 Yu 12, 25  
 Yyrkoon 11 - 12, 27, 44 - 45

## Z

Zhorta 50

# ELRIC!

## DEMON / ELEMENTAL SHEET

SYMBOL / PORTRAIT

Alias \_\_\_\_\_ True Name \_\_\_\_\_

Breed \_\_\_\_\_ Description \_\_\_\_\_

Need \_\_\_\_\_

Attitude \_\_\_\_\_ Magic Points to Summon \_\_\_\_\_

### CHARACTERISTICS

STR \_\_\_\_\_

CON \_\_\_\_\_

SIZ \_\_\_\_\_

INT \_\_\_\_\_ x5= Idea \_\_\_\_\_ %

POW \_\_\_\_\_ x5= Luck \_\_\_\_\_ %

DEX \_\_\_\_\_ x5= Dexterity \_\_\_\_\_ %

MOV \_\_\_\_\_ Armor \_\_\_\_\_

### SKILLS

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### MAGIC POINTS

Unconscious												
	0	1	2	3	4							
5	6	7	8	9	10							
11	12	13	14	15	16							
17	18	19	20	21	22							
23	24	25	26	27	28							
29	30	31	32	33	34							
35	36	37	38	39	40							
41	42	43	44	45	46							
47	48	49	50	51	52							
53	54	55	56	57	58							
59	60	61	62	63	64							
65	66	67	68									

### HIT POINTS

UNCONSCIOUS												
Dead	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	3	4					
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12					
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20					
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28					
29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36					
37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44					
45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52					
53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60					
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68					

### ABILITIES

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### HAND-TO-HAND WEAPONS

Attack or Weapon	Current Skill %	Attack Damage	Hit Points	Length	Handed
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					

### MISSILE WEAPONS

Weapon	Current Skill %	Attack Damage	Base Range	Attacks/Round	Hit Points
<input type="checkbox"/>					
<input type="checkbox"/>					

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# ELRIC!

## DRAGON SHEET

SYMBOL / PORTRAIT

Title and Alias \_\_\_\_\_

True Name \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Description \_\_\_\_\_

Attitude \_\_\_\_\_ Bonded With \_\_\_\_\_

### CHARACTERISTICS

STR \_\_\_\_\_

CON \_\_\_\_\_

SIZ \_\_\_\_\_

INT \_\_\_\_\_ x5= Idea \_\_\_\_\_ %

POW \_\_\_\_\_ x5= Luck \_\_\_\_\_ %

DEX \_\_\_\_\_ x5= Dexterity \_\_\_\_\_ %

APP \_\_\_\_\_ Armor \_\_\_\_\_

### ABILITIES

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

### MAGIC POINTS

Unconscious												
	0	1	2	3	4							
5	6	7	8	9	10							
11	12	13	14	15	16							
17	18	19	20	21	22							
23	24	25	26	27	28							
29	30	31	32	33	34							
35	36	37	38	39	40							
41	42	43	44	45	46							
47	48	49	50	51	52							
53	54	55	56	57	58							
59	60	61	62	63	64							
65	66	67	68									

### HIT POINTS

UNCONSCIOUS												
Dead	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	3	4					
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12					
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20					
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28					
29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36					
37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44					
45	46	47	48	49	50	51	52					
53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60					
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68					

### SKILLS

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ \_\_\_\_\_

### HAND-TO-HAND WEAPONS

Attack or Weapon	Current Skill %	Attack Damage	Hit Points	Length	Handed
<input type="checkbox"/> BITE					
<input type="checkbox"/> CLAW					
<input type="checkbox"/>					

### MISSILE WEAPONS

Weapon	Current Skill %	Attack Damage	Base Range	Attacks/Round	Hit Points
<input type="checkbox"/> COMBUST. VENOM					
<input type="checkbox"/>					

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# MELNIBONÉAN SHEET

Player's Name \_\_\_\_\_

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## ALLEGIANCE



CHAOS  
(+20)



BALANCE



LAW

SYMBOL / PORTRAIT



## CHARACTERISTICS

- ☐ STR \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ CON \_\_\_\_\_  
SIZ \_\_\_\_\_  
☐ INT x5= \_\_\_\_\_ Ideas \_\_\_\_\_ %  
☐ POW x5= \_\_\_\_\_ Luck \_\_\_\_\_ %  
☐ DEX x5= \_\_\_\_\_ Dexterity \_\_\_\_\_ %  
☐ APP x5= \_\_\_\_\_ Charisma \_\_\_\_\_ %

DAMAGE BONUS

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Birthplace \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_  
Family \_\_\_\_\_  
Title/Nickname \_\_\_\_\_  
Looks, Attitude \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## SKILLS

- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Art (35%) _____            | <input type="checkbox"/> Listen (25%) _____          | <input type="checkbox"/> Sailing (15%) <sup>1</sup> _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Torture (40%) _____        | <input type="checkbox"/> Million Spheres (30%) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> Scent/Taste (15%) _____          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Move Quietly (20%) _____    | <input type="checkbox"/> Scribe (30%) _____               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Natural World (55%) _____   | <input type="checkbox"/> Search (20%) _____               |
| <input type="checkbox"/> _____                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Navigate (40%) _____        | <input type="checkbox"/> Swim (25%) _____                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Bargain (15%) _____        | <input type="checkbox"/> Oratory (35%) _____         | <input type="checkbox"/> Throw (25%) _____                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Climb (40%) _____          | Other Language (00) _____                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Track (10%) _____                |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Conceal Object (25%) _____ | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Trap (05%) _____                 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disguise (15%) _____       | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                       | <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown Kingdoms (00) _____      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dodge (DEX x2%) _____      | <input type="checkbox"/> Own Lang. (INT x5%) _____   | <input type="checkbox"/> Young Kingdoms (15%) _____       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluate (45%) _____       | <input type="checkbox"/> Physik (60%) _____          | <input type="checkbox"/> Witch Sight (30%) _____          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Fast Talk (15%) _____      | <input type="checkbox"/> Potions (30%) _____         | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Hide (20%) _____           | <input type="checkbox"/> Ride (65%) _____            | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Insight (15%) _____        | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                       | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Jump (25%) _____           | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                       | <input type="checkbox"/> _____                            |

## HIT POINTS

UNCONSCIOUS

Dead	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36
37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44
45	46	47	48	49			

## MAGIC POINTS

Unconscious	0	1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31	32	33	34
35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46
47	48	49	50	51	52
53	54	55	56	57	58
59	60	61	62	63	64
65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76
77	78	79	80	81	82
83	84	85			

## MAGIC IN MEMORY

(INT - limit = INT x2)

## HAND-TO-HAND WEAPONS

Attack or Weapon	Current Skill %	Attack Damage	HP Points	Length	Handed
<input type="checkbox"/> Brawl (40%)					
<input type="checkbox"/> Wrestle (35%)					
<input type="checkbox"/> _____					
<input type="checkbox"/> _____					
<input type="checkbox"/> _____					
<input type="checkbox"/> _____					
<input type="checkbox"/> _____					
<input type="checkbox"/> _____					
<input type="checkbox"/> _____					
<input type="checkbox"/> _____					

## ARMOR, SHIELD

Armor Type	Helmet On: Dmg Deflect / % Affect	Helmet Off: Dmg Deflect / % Affect	Norm. Burden	Rounds to Put On
MEL. PLATE	1D10+6 / 25%	1D10+4 / 10%	mod.	5
<input type="checkbox"/> SHIELD _____ %	Attack Damage _____			
H	S	F	L	Base Chance _____ %
				HP _____

## MISSILE WEAPONS

Weapon	Current Skill %	Attack Damage	Base Range	Attacks/Round	HP Points
<input type="checkbox"/> MEL. BONE BOW (10%)		2D6+1+1/2 db	200	1	12
<input type="checkbox"/> _____					
<input type="checkbox"/> _____					

## BACKGROUND

• Full Name, Titles, Aliases \_\_\_\_\_

• Home Tower \_\_\_\_\_

• Family & Friends \_\_\_\_\_

• Enemies \_\_\_\_\_

## TRAVEL GEAR

• Equipment \_\_\_\_\_

• Favorite Conveyance \_\_\_\_\_

## GRIMOIRE, NOTES

## WEALTH

• Silvers on Person \_\_\_\_\_

• Income \_\_\_\_\_

• Property \_\_\_\_\_

• Important Slaves \_\_\_\_\_

• Treasure \_\_\_\_\_

## BOUND DEMONS & ELEMENTALS

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Breed / Type \_\_\_\_\_

STR \_\_\_\_\_

CON \_\_\_\_\_

SIZ \_\_\_\_\_

INT \_\_\_\_\_ x5=

POW \_\_\_\_\_ x5=

DEX \_\_\_\_\_ x5=

MOV \_\_\_\_\_

DAMAGE BONUS

\_\_\_\_\_

Idea \_\_\_\_\_ %

Luck \_\_\_\_\_ %

Dexterity \_\_\_\_\_ %

Armor \_\_\_\_\_

Need \_\_\_\_\_

Abilities \_\_\_\_\_

Weapons \_\_\_\_\_

Skills \_\_\_\_\_

Magic Points to Summon: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Breed / Type \_\_\_\_\_

STR \_\_\_\_\_

CON \_\_\_\_\_

SIZ \_\_\_\_\_

INT \_\_\_\_\_ x5=

POW \_\_\_\_\_ x5=

DEX \_\_\_\_\_ x5=

MOV \_\_\_\_\_

DAMAGE BONUS

\_\_\_\_\_

Idea \_\_\_\_\_ %

Luck \_\_\_\_\_ %

Dexterity \_\_\_\_\_ %

Armor \_\_\_\_\_

Need \_\_\_\_\_

Abilities \_\_\_\_\_

Weapons \_\_\_\_\_

Skills \_\_\_\_\_

Magic Points to Summon: \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Breed / Type \_\_\_\_\_

STR \_\_\_\_\_

CON \_\_\_\_\_

SIZ \_\_\_\_\_

INT \_\_\_\_\_ x5=

POW \_\_\_\_\_ x5=

DEX \_\_\_\_\_ x5=

MOV \_\_\_\_\_

DAMAGE BONUS

\_\_\_\_\_

Idea \_\_\_\_\_ %

Luck \_\_\_\_\_ %

Dexterity \_\_\_\_\_ %

Armor \_\_\_\_\_

Need \_\_\_\_\_

Abilities \_\_\_\_\_

Weapons \_\_\_\_\_

Skills \_\_\_\_\_

Magic Points to Summon: \_\_\_\_\_

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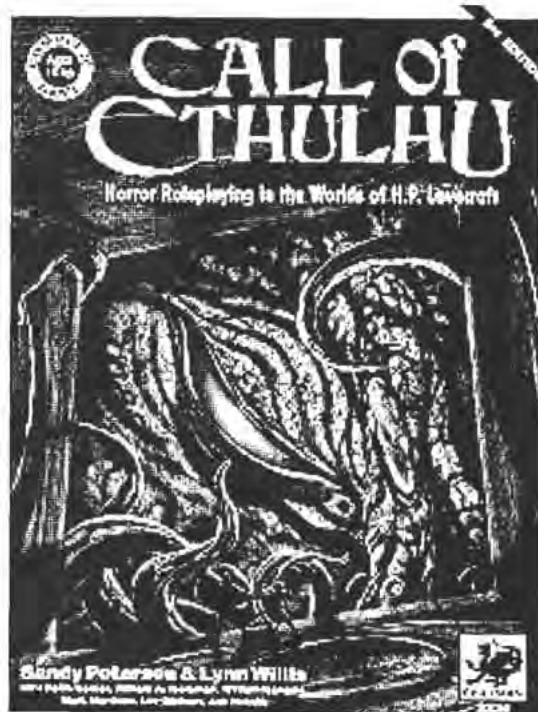
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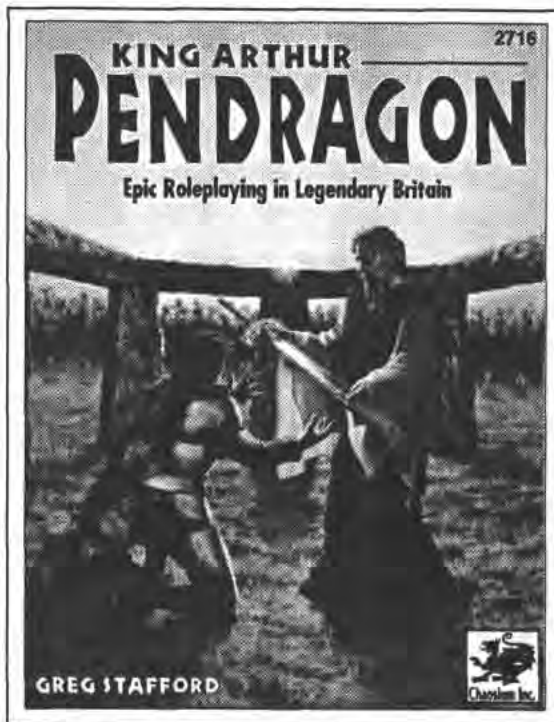
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