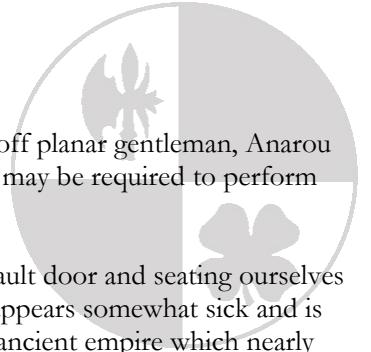


Heretics of Miloo

(An adventure by Gordon Lewis)



2nd Day of Spring, 802

Seagate the city of beggars, Despotism of Cazarla, this guild meeting we have been hired by an off planar gentleman, Anarou Hawatt, to assist him in setting up an outpost farming manavores upon the plane of Miloo. We may be required to perform many tasks including diplomacy, escort duties and dealing with the local populace.

We meet him in the secret summoning rooms beneath the guild, entering through the golden vault door and seating ourselves within the dim room amongst pentagrams and circles but keeping out of the triangles. Hawatt appears somewhat sick and is seated within a truesilver triangle, as if he were geased. He lets us know that he comes from an ancient empire which nearly collapsed in the past and has no mages, this is why we are needed as the plane of Miloo is very magical. He claims to have access to multiple weapons of mass destruction but would rather conquer than destroy.

From a melodramatic member of guild security we learn that he is the master assassin for house Grenhythe and has bought unrestricted access to the guild library by greasing the correct palms and having contacts with the local despot. The climate they intend settling in is hot and dry like Arabe so Princess Caralane goes shopping for rangery stuff while the entire party are outfitted with matching black clothes with gold trim and two gallons of beer each as a precaution against dehydration.



A New Tavern in Seagate



View the bound GOLD



Arranging for the souls of the two of the mercenaries who abducted Viola's children to be tortured to death by the savage duke, I managed a reasonable trade learning that there is only one god on Miloo with many faces, a lot of white hats but thankfully a few reasonable people. Leaving Douglas Walin to feed Vivians pet hydra and continue mutating the two followers of Botis into horrible monsters I arrive back in Seagate in time to witness day two of Princess Caralane beastmastering our leader, Robert, using sleep deprivation which she claims is very effective as "with less conscious thought the lessons go straight to the core".

5th Day of Spring

We meet at slippery rock which is a wonderful place full of obedient pretty young girls where we purchase one or two trinkets from the dwarven witch Graven of the Brightrock and his curvaceous assistant, Sarah. Later in the morning a carriage bearing the local despot's crest arrives with Hawatt and a young and rather costly courtesan who announce their presence with a crier. The lady is Sir Mortimer Carringsbrook's widow, evidently he was the despot's man killed by being squashed flat by a golem on Miloo as he hid under some leaves, and she would appreciate it if we could return his remains.

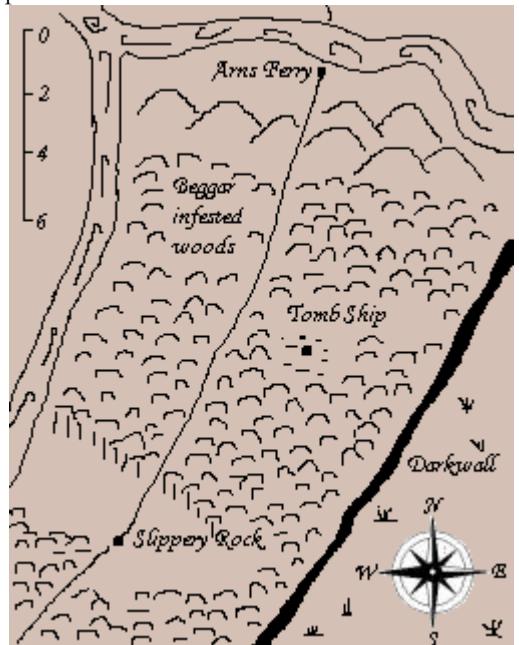
Following Lady Carringsbrook's departure Howat lead us to a nearby house with a golden double eagle statuette out front and has even more attractive young ladies attend to us, seated on new oak furniture we dine on lovely pastries and good wine.

Hawatt introduces us to a sultry beauty, Natasha Highbury, who along with himself are the sole survivors of a shipwreck, which he then proceeds to lead us to in the wild and lawless forests to the north. The trip is mostly uneventful due to the flashy show of magic, with most party members travelling within a sphere of darkness, which scares off the beggar-cannibal wanna-be bandit's. Their presence at least shows there are no greater undead about and is to be expected given the endemic incompetence within Cazala's sycophantic ruling elite.

Princess Caralane "I would hunt them but their not sentient enough"

Arriving in a devastated region of the forest there is a large metal block some hundred and fifty feet long which they claim once flew, however whatever made it fly on their plane failed spectacularly on Elusia with it falling sixty thousand feet and only Howat and Highbury surviving. Their opening stick thingy failed to work until Princess Caralane gave it a rub down with strange metal which both caused it to open the door and disintegrate when triggered.

Greeted by the stench of twenty manweight of crew-pate' we hastily retreated upwind leaving Robert, who offered to clean up, once Vivian had cast hypnotism so he wouldn't be repulsed and a huge funeral pyre was burning courtesy of Sooty. Spending a pleasant afternoon lying about in the sun in idle conversation, Hawatt reveals to us that their main vessel, one of hundreds in their fleet, is half way to the moon and we will need this ship to reach it. I begin the painfully long divination process.



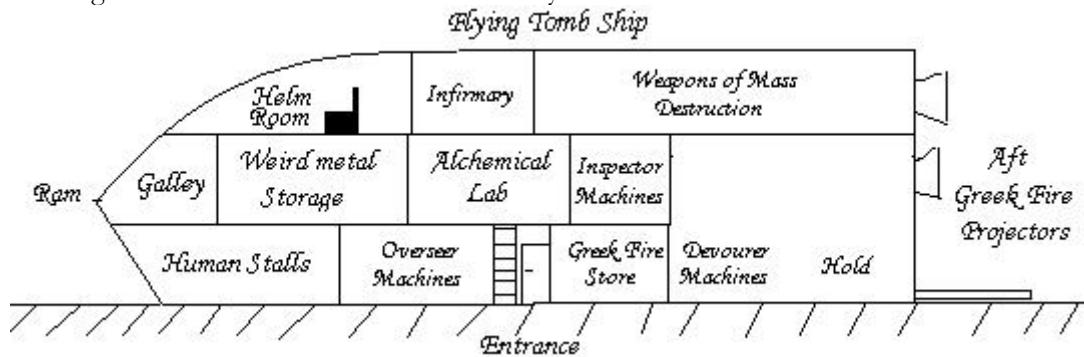
6th Day of Spring

Robert completes cleaning the ship, but ruffles our delicate sensibilities with some of the strange and twisted deviant games that he played disrespectfully with the bodies although I strongly suspect Vivian's hypnotic suggestions may have been to blame for this behaviour.

After thirteen hours of divinations and discussions started the previous day we uncover the following

- Hawatt has a true name and has been keyed to the triangle to help keep him alive as he is being killed by a magical environment, Highbury considers him to be an abomination and guild security don't trust him which makes me question why he was given unrestricted access to the guild library. He didn't get to read the three books written by Sif's brother Caroc.
- Highbury has a true name and uses cantrip type magic of non-college origin which uses her true name and allows levitation, healing, cleaning and such. She is a priestess of a puritanical religion which insists on virginity, hard beds and other such foolishness in its members and is rather determined to keep to her vows. It will be amusing to see how long such a group of potential, near perfect (apart from not being water mages) sacrificial victims survive in Miloo.
- The ship is not magical and is an overcomplicated piece of rubbish which even the most deranged mechanician would be hard pressed to dream up, it doesn't work. Suggestions to melt it down are received coolly.

About lunchtime Hawatt starts to fade fast and so in desperation he is skinchanged into a nice black and white lunar empire rat. It seems his left eye was prosthetic and causing the difficulties with him, fortunately it didn't change when he did, tearing itself out of the rats head painfully with a trail of icor and white brainy stuff. Once the princess had healed him he made a demanding rat and had Mira running about on errands for the rest of the day.



Highbury takes us on a tour of the ship, designed by a mad mechanician the doors take minutes to open with twirly bits and levers just to get into a bathroom, Hawatt's sock drawer taking Mira about five minutes of twisting and prodding the handle just to open and drop his mechanical eye in. In a room where the mess would normally be there are weird metal stones which they normally heat which causes them to produce a reversed increase gravity spell on the ship, these seem to have failed. Further aft is a glass walled alchemical lab full of reagents and fifty fifty gallon barrels of ice cold blue coloured experimental greek fire stored below for the aft projectors. To the Fore are the dead crew's quarters which are austere in the extreme with hard beds and sparse furnishings, Highbury's room included a chair complete with a belted strap to hold in whoever sits in it before the 'altar' where she performs 'purification' rituals.

After discussing various strategies to get the ship airborne and coming up blank Highbury suggest detonating the fifty fifty gallon barrels of experimental extremely explosive frozen cold grenade oil under it as small amounts exploding under a cup make it shoot up in the air, so by inference large amounts should work for the ship. Unanimously voting to ignore the madwoman, we return to Seagate to get Hawatt's eye regrown and numerous backfire curses removed.

7th Day of Spring

Some of the scholar's at the guild suggest hiring large numbers of witches to use ritualised instil flight to fly the ship up, however what they fail to consider is that we wouldn't be able to get them back, and they are our beautiful young witches and Hawatt and the puritans cannot have them. The party decide to use a true abomination instead, a cursed spelljammer helm from the depths of the ninth (TSR) plane of hell, courtesy of the gentlefolk's exploration society.

14th Day of Spring

The ship Beagle arrives in port with the helm™, Robert meeting the captain and Bernhard Chen a grey haired philosopher who is practiced in using it. Skilled diplomacy on the part of Robert such as telling the master assassin Hawatt to 'basically pay up' and attempting to cash a guild promissory note with master pennywise eventually bears fruit with guild security honouring Hawatt's credit note so the helm can be hired.



Natasha Highbury

After a outrageously expensive morning spent upon a hilltop near Arns ferry incinerating a colossal mound of myrrh to drive out my bad karma, cursing the outlaws downwind, I meet the party who fly a twenty foot skiff out to the tomb ship from Seagate, Bernhard manning the cursed helm™ is quaintly dressed in ‘burn the witch clothes’, black robes complete with stars and moons printed on them. Packing the skiff away in the hold we construct a dirtbox for Mira to play in as she seems upset at the prospect of being away from the ground for an extended period and light a fire to keep warm and for the princess’s coffee.

Celebrating our departure with a magnum of Vallée du soleil (Valley of the Sun) Doux 786, a vintage sweet champagne, which I admit I failed to fully enjoy due to myrrh’d taste buds, we relish the sight of the ground falling away below us extremely rapidly with the beggar encampment, Seagate, disappearing into the haze after only twenty seconds. Stardreamer is somewhat experienced in this sort of thing and despite his resolute good humour Mira, who sensibly declined Vivians offer of a hypnotism, has a ladylike turn and faints, the poor dear.

Higher we fly out of the air and into the ether where the sky is bright and the sun blue and sparkly somewhat like our champagne, eventually passing through the sky and into a thick region of hellfire surrounding Elusia which appears totally flat with distinct edges. Over the next twenty minutes the mana level lowers to nothing and we enter the void where, with shudders and roars the ship comes to life and closes the hatches.

As the ship awakens several things happen at once as the party runs hectically in different directions.

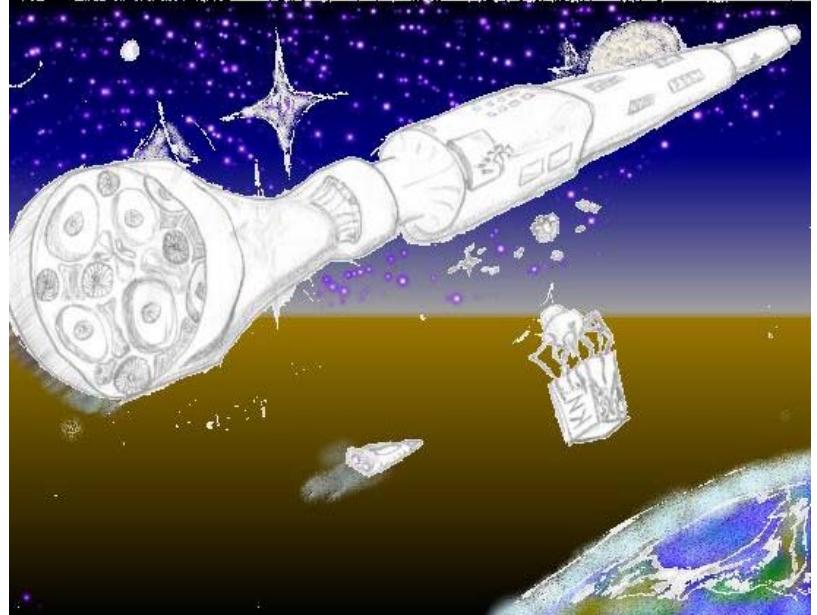
- The helm sucks the last of the magical essence from Bernhard and as he collapses screaming, Stardreamer in a fit of heroic bravery leaps into the helm where it consumes him, extending the flight long enough however for the weird metal to begin functioning so the ship does not fall before he collapses.
- Soulless golemlike monsters called bots awaken around the ship and a devourer bot begins to eat Mira’s dirtbox with the unconscious Mira within. After finding out that a battle axe is too delicate a weapon to harm it, Sooty’s bound fire comes to the rescue, taking an instant dislike to it for eating its wood, burning it to death but being killed in turn by a small machine which sprays it with some white poison gas. Throwing Mira’s petite yet wonderfully muscled body over one shoulder, I make off with her to the relative safety of a nearby human stall.
- Vivian, fleeing in terror into one of the human stalls alone is hypnotised by dream controlling things which leave him with pleasant memories and no recollection of what really occurred while he slept and unknown post hypnotic suggestions.

Battle Axe dissection of several of the small, ‘not fast enough’, inspector Bots shows they don’t have little men inside them, have no aura and yet seem slightly smarter than a Urialite, perhaps being even as intelligent as a regular golem. After prising open three of the little blighters large armoured and armed overseer bots appear discouraging further curiosity.

Princess Caralane following the advice of a friendly instructor void-golem, which is masterfully competent at moving bodies about with levitation, revives Bernhard, Robert and Mira using restorative/broken-glass potions of various strengths from the ships infirmary.

(Overheard in Mira’s room)
“Lie back and open your mouth”

(And later from Princess Caralane)
“I know how to make a human swallow”



The City/Ship, Emperor Shaddam VI

Eventually we all resurface back at the helm™’s room where Hawatt and Highbury are talking to small box sized bot, attempting simple communications ourselves uncovers little information of any use, which is to be expected given our lack of training. Stardreamer, who is positively awash with power, notices that streams of mana seem to be leaching off our magical items leaving noticeable trails behind us as we crowd about the windows drinking in the view, which while quite pretty, is hardly worth the rigmarole of this tiresomely slow method of planar travel.

Mira, being somewhat of a delicate flower takes it badly being in a small metal ship ruled by soulless golemlike monsters, surrounded by the endless ice cold and airless void which is sucking the very magical essence from our bones, and quietly assumes a quivering foetal position. About lunchtime we approach a five mile long void city/ship, noticing the massive aft Greek fire projectors appear fouled with void-fungus, needing a damn good clean out.

Rather than docking with ropes which would have been quick we spend an intolerably long time waiting for ridiculous twirly lock-clamp things to do the same job before leaving via an invisible force walled corridor (they also use these as matresses on beds), Princess Caralane force marching the zombie-like Mira out ahead as a ward detector. The mana level is very low in the ship which we discover when a platoon turns up and assaults the Princess, receiving a beating in return, before apologising and confiscating her nasty strange metal arrows after promising to return them. Mira got somewhat scorched during the encounter but managed both to retain her glazed good looks and not catch fire.

Princess to Soldiers who jump (on) her...Get off, I do not have humans on top of me.

A note at this point on money, they have accounts for each of us with an undisclosed amount of their currency, credits, in them possibly based upon social rank. Hawatt seemed to think that the three thousand credits paid for one of the princess arrows equated to about twelve palfreys or ten thousand pennies, about a three pennies per credit exchange, but given the costs on board the ship for fodder, meals and baths I would revise that to about four thousand credits to a single penny.

Jan is the apologetic leader of the six foot six marines and the Princesses liaison is the courtier Michael Smithe, who really should learn that attempting to intimidate us with ritual evisceration is somewhat uncouth, as is describing orcs as a sub-species of elf, which nearly saw him eviscerated himself. Moving into a more upmarket region of the ship past vases and statues and noticeably less bots we travel through a portal to a region of the city with ten story buildings and people flying about between them. Fashion seems to involve women wearing long dresses and men in wealthy Destinian styled clothes.

Stardreamer faints from seeing too many aura's just prior to our meeting a sergeant Thompson who collects our weapons, providing princess Caralane and myself, as her guard, a silly unbalanced half sword weapon no doubt for duelling. They have buttons on them which when pressed raise either a force shield, which cannot stop magic but pushes enemies out of close, or a force blade on the missing tip of the sword, they are good for twenty hours use and of course will no doubt fail to work at the most inopportune time. Our rooms are provided, the princess getting a cramped six room apartment, myself a three room peasant dwelling while the remainder of the party get slave stalls, promptly becoming the princesses house guests.

Pretending to be a lad out on the town so those I meet don't think I might be a spy, heaven forbid, and dosing myself with herbalist human attraction perfume I use my enhanced charms to meet a young lady called Libbi who shows me about the ship. Quite Innocently with her guidance I learn much of its layout, peoples and so forth before retiring to her apartment, uncovering a startling fact, these people are all celibate virgins and find the very thought of carnal relations repulsive. Intrigued, Libbi calls in one of the priestesses who teaches me what has replaced bed sport, a relaxation mantra and a key phrase which causes the victim to fall into a self delusional dream state, where their desires seem to be fulfilled.

This should prove interesting taking large numbers of virgins into a high mana zone and will make the formation of political alliances through marriage impossible as consummation is required.

These delusions, which admittedly would be a wonderful way of controlling the population, will also have given them a possibly fatally inflated view of their capabilities, both in bed and battle.

Once free of the delusion and expressing my contempt for it, the priestess offers me her body to use in a more conventional sense, in return for a favour in future. Being wary of these priestesses motives and still grumpy after paying for a greater, I refuse, informing her quite rightly that the use of her body is not worth the cost of my services. Her over inflated ego beautifully crushed she lashes out with the threat 'we will be watching you', revealing in a moment of careless rage that my caution was well justified.



Expected
Visitor

Returning to the party with the unbelievable news I discover that while I was away

- Vivian and the princess had separately been force cleansed in a strange device you float within which cleans using sound. Although I failed to notice a difference as they always appear impeccably groomed, according to them it functioned well.
- Sooty had fallen asleep in the slave stall assigned to him and was gassed with poison when a fire broke out. Vivian quite rightly took issue with this attempted assassination and gave Smithe a good telling off when he tried to explain it away in the process revealing that we are under constant watch by hidden bots which record our every move. Sooty was taken to a fireproof room for safety's sake by some seven foot freaks of nature and an entity called a Dixlaxian (gtn).
- Stardreamer and Robert had a good sleep on the beds, however it seems their dreams were controlled in a similar manner to the delusion mantra I fell victim of. Being wary of becoming a mind controlled slave myself I will be avoiding them and be checking for post hypnotic suggestions such as 'pay your taxes with a smile', 'obey the priestesses' or 'you like golems'

Showing her compassionate side, Princess Caralane takes Mira to a nearby twenty acre garden where she recovers from her zombie like state and stops making pathetic mewing sounds. Expressing an interest in how the babies get made, Princess Caralane and retinue travel to the baby-alchemist labs where we find enough babies to give even Bune indigestion, in vats of liquid with ropes and prongy bits in them.

The alchemist informs us that all people are made here, are improved humans of two types, small male and female thinkers and big male bashers. They take eighteen months to manufacture and cost twenty thousand credits (five pennies) each. Despite calling the babies abominations, abhorrent creations which are an affront to life, I fail to convince anyone of my sincerity which could have earned us a bribe to overcome our moral repulsion, curse the forces of light, I don't see why we should earn less due to our moral flexibility.

The princess expresses a desire to purchase some babies rather than following the tried and tested example set by numerous other ladies in the guild by breeding with daemons, dark gods or dragons and then wiccan blessing them to produce improved children. It seems they have undertaken strange metal experiments also and let me know that humans don't respond well, although that is a matter of aesthetics I feel, but imps do, an interesting titbit of information I must try out.

Through the evil genius of alchemically growing children, dream controlled from before they are even decanted, you could raise an army of unborn super soldiers to heed your every command, with no social ties of family or annoying weaknesses such as love or compassion to interfere with their unquestioning loyalty to you and your evil empire, muuhahahah. (Oh wait, they have). The only problem with this evil plan however is you are left in charge of a empire of celibate, mindless idiots, devoid of orgy pits and the other necessities of life, similar in fact to Mordeaux.

It is likely that the church of Sho-I-ya on Miloo, which is expecting a great evil to arrive will be keeping a keen eye out, and when a group of vat grown freaks of nature turn up and start shriving their gods creatures will declare a holy crusade. Although my first thought would be to conceal their true nature, it is rather pointless as telepathy is certain in high level diplomacy. Our employers should expect howling legions of fanatical knights, super golems and mages sharing their doorstep with all the randy mana creatures they attract, shortly after arriving on Miloo, with any luck we will be long gone by then however as crusades require a fair lead up time.

Since Miloo has only one god, she is possibly less constrained in her actions and could become directly involved, doing things from stopping the delusion mantra's working, driving or employers insane to sinking the continent they have taken control of.

Hopefully we will be paid by our employers and not ripped off, especially with the prices on the ship, as they are a race of lawyers and accountants who should go ice skating with Seir.

Captain Jantek Lootple invites us to dinner, so dressed in various attire we enjoy their finest food, about average guild fare. Intense questioning by Vivian combined with nearly as intense evasion from those at the meal eventually dragged from them that they plan to release a dozen, two-yard long worms into a desert on Miloo. The worms grow extremely large, excrete mana and if drowned produce large amounts of unbelievably poisonous fluid they call holy water.

Provided with a thousand mile across map of the desert there are three cities on rock mountains and a very high altitude, highly fertile area to the south, which we suspect is high mana due to the lack of any cities.

Evidently they had informed guild security of the worms and had been forbidden to release them in Elusia, being told of Miloo as an alternative destination. Showing the truly bureaucratic efficiency of our guild this information was not passed on to us however.

The discussions finally produced a plan, "Plan A", to take over one of the cities for the water source, arable land, abundant supply of slave labour and probable low mana. Due to its location we choose the most southwestern city, which appears to be dug into a cliff face and have a population of approximately a thousand households.

Accidental Serial Killers is what Vivian described us after we cast unseen upon a soldier to see if his compatriots had witchsight, this having the unfortunate effect of causing his mechanical third eye to explode from his head in a welter of gore before bouncing off a nearby wall. Further tests showed that these useless mechanical marvels not only kill whoever has magic cast upon them but in many cases cause soldiers who even view an unseen individual to collapse gibbering. Twelve hundred soldiers have no prosthetics although a few thousand more can have them removed. Vivian generously loaned his elven eyes to their scholars allowing the soldiers to be given vat grown copies.

Stardreamer, who found that minute casting magic is possible but very fatiguing and also hurts, also found that it hurts their technology, utterly destroying a bot with a light spell, meanwhile the princess who broke her arm in unarmed combat practice found that the bots could heal it as good as new in ten minutes. Unfortunately these will not function upon Miloo.

15th Day of Spring

Attached to a dream machine, Vivian shares his most nasty real life experiences with six soldiers to see how well they cope with living outside their antiseptic, whitewashed pathetic excuse for a society. The psychotic died from empathising with a vampire too well which brought up the suggestion of turning them into greater undead and the two mummies boys flipped out upon experiencing the taste and texture of grilled baby hobbit. Three degenerates seemed to rather enjoy the experiences, which seemed also to be the consensus amongst the observing dixlaxians.

The soldiers showed theoretical knowledge of rape and terror tactics and we convinced them to change to using silvered hand and a half swords, battle-axes and crossbows. Their mechanicians also made some green armour made of an unknown substance which they seemed to think would stand up to the rigors of mana and began construction of a squat fortress suitable for the conditions which could be brought down in sections. Bernhard Chen seems to think he can endure one trip per day using the helm.

Mira who was sucking the life force from the park while hugging a long suffering tree, was approached by six priestesses in the garden who, like the political whores they are, attempted to ingratiate themselves with the party. Performing ritualised magic they empowered her with the ability to cast away from contact with the earth. Gaining stress lines like an overworked bar wenches they then ate restorative wafers which invigorated not only them but the nearby plants as well.

22nd day of Spring

Marching up behind me a group of two dixlaxians and two humans escort me into a nearby room to speak to their mistress, a feminine power called Ba-la whom they are pacted to. She claims that it is best for 'US' to ensure the outpost on Miloo is not established and that it is best that 'They' all die in the void. Further discussions reveal the worms and the holy water they produce to be the main problems rather than the abominations setting up an outpost.

Being honourable, a guild member in good standing and quite frankly having been paid enough to overcome any moral objections against working for abominations to unleash a pestilence of worms upon Miloo, despite the presence of reasonable people living upon it, I refuse such a breach of guild contract. Compromising I agree to discuss their offer with the party, keep their confidence and in true mercenary fashion suggest she hire another party to eradicate the worms as a future mission.



These poor fools are obviously desperate for any support they can get, without a doubt their wonderful conspiracy being known by the priestesses who are keeping an eye on me and Hawatt who seems rather capable. Like a boil this conspiracy is gathering all who would conspire against our employers for ritual evisceration when Hawatt decides to lance it, hopefully before we set foot on Miloo and have other enemies to consider.

Later that day I a dixlaxian conspirator informs me that they have decided not to wait but attack, and since we have been disarmed by Hawatt we let him know that we will remain neutral, besides if they cannot control their own people then they are pathetic and deserve to die.

Arnaud..We should summon Havares as a moral compass

23rd day of Spring

We review the troops, finding truly amazing progress although most seem to becoming a little crazed. Several thousand have copies of Vivians eyes, which look a little exotic to say the least in a human and their mad mechanicians have also been at work attempting to produce flying machines for the troops, testing them on the troops and giving the healer bots plenty of work.

There seem to be two successful designs, a elegant metal tube with wings which are cranked out which holds three and acts like a gliding spell and a carapace with beetle wings which slows falling sufficiently to only break one out of three legs when landing. Stardreamer like the angel of death accidentally murders one of the technicians while demonstrating his starwings, which casually brushes one of his implanted mechanical marvels causing the usual gory results. We then encourage the mechanicians to concentrate on death traps for the fortress rather than killing the troops.

Hawatt approaches us afterwards and lets us know that he has spied upon all of the discussions with the rebels, surprise, surprise, and wishes to hire us to babysitting the worms. Preferring to remain neutral in such internal political conflicts, and having told the rebels I would, I demand an additional thirty pounds of gold for the party to buy our services and break faith.

Hawatt wishes us to guard the anti-room into where the worms are reputedly stored while he attempts to wipe out the conspiracy or we reach Miloo. The anit-room itself is fifty feet on a side with benches along two walls and a large ten foot across metal doors at each end which slide open, it smells strongly of myrrh and cinnamon.

Hour Three

We are attacked by two human and one dixlaxian female priestesses who teleported in. Wearing body suits, which rendered them indetectable from all but infravision, and force shields, which don't stop magic weapons, their magic, which later divination showed to be similar to mind magics, seemed to consist of a powerful form of hypnotism called "the voice" which allows commands such as "die" and "blind", telepathy and some puny bolt spell. While they cast spells and tried to open the door to the outside...

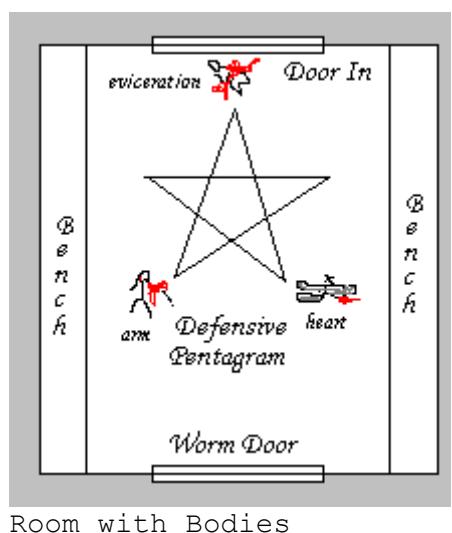
We gutted them.

Finishing the massacre with some looting we noticed that the door to the outside had lights flashing faster and faster down the middle, so using our knowledge of mechanics I gave it a good thump with my axe causing it to spark and stop before casting counterspells over the area which blew out the panels. Shortly afterwards and for some time sounds of a heroic combat were heard outside.

Hour Six and a half

Hawatt enters the room via the worm door with Highbury, an assistant priestess, two dixlaxians and four human warriors. Another one of Highbury's priestesses with them had been chewed upon by the worms, which they had snuck past and was mortally wounded so I turned her into a healthy but otherwise unassuming mouse for ease of transportation until she is healed.

It seems there is another mentat assassin on board and they are loosing the battle for the ship, consequently Lord Kirrian wishes to save his skin by fleeing into exile with the remnants of his court and more importantly at least three of the worms. After ensuring that Hawatt is Hawatt we enter the worm room, which is two hundred feet to a side and has five levels of walkways over a sandy floor in which surprisingly the worms are actually still kept, it reeks.



Room with Bodies

Mira chats to the ten-foot worms in a horrid screeching dialect of wormish while feeding them the bodies of the two priestesses we had slain, which she diced, into fist sized chunks so they wouldn't get indigestion. As they feed I sneak about upon the sand "ab-duck-ting" five of them before leaving in haste via the doors we had jammed shut which Hawatt skilfully opens by pulling a secret lever. According to Mira the worms are territorial and particularly stupid, somewhat like a Michaline, and like a michaline are more easily handled when skin changed into confused ducks and kept in sacks.

Making our way around knots of combatants fighting we pass through the ship, killing any who dare oppose us until, with the aid of stardreamers wings of death and some mechanical strap on healer machines, which cure blindness and quicken at the same time we finally rescue the Lord Kirrian Grenhythe, half a dozen more guards and ten surviving noblewomen. Lord Kirrian has an epiphany and seems to think the problem is with the "vat born" as he calls them with undisguised loathing, being untrustworthy, however I manage to convince him to allow me to rescue some forty women and children from a school we pass which I squeeze into my magical backpack.

24th Day of Spring

Hacking and Slaying through the opposition we board the three hundred foot long arc, upon which the helm is installed, which had built over the last day to deliver the scouting party to Miloo and ram our way out of the Emperor Shaddam VI. Stardreamers plan to hide the worms upon Miloo and go native, rather than bringing attention to themselves by conquest and being slaughtered by deadly highly magical creatures seems to be "Plan B".

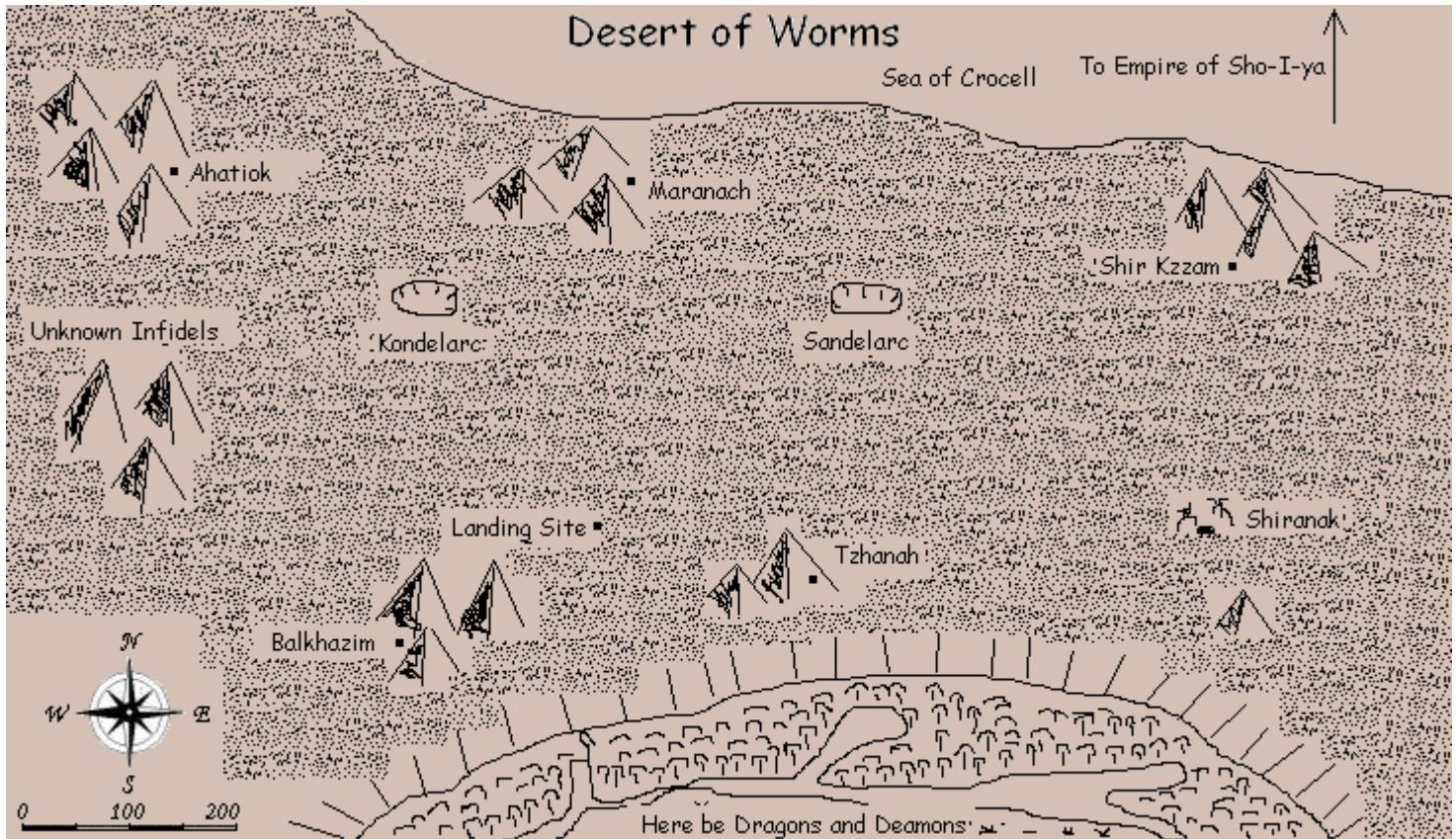
The Survivors

The Party and Bernhard Chen of the gentlefolk's society manning the helm.
Anarau Hawatt, the party employer and his troops, two dixlaxian and four human.
Natasha Highbury and her assistant priestess.
Lord Kirrian Grenhythe, his six bodyguards and ten noblewomen.

While we enjoy a leisurely flight down to Miloo the Emperor Shaddam VI ineffectually fires bolts of light at us, which the magic field about the helm absorbs with ease. We plan on quietly skimming low over Balkhazim, which we had planned on invading, before heading off into the desert and hiding to give any rebels following us the slip, however after passing through the hellfire and entering the air we are met by twenty one humans upon flying carpets.

Standing in the open ten foot wide doorway I find communication difficult as they only speak Arabe and Reichspiel of which neither any of us are particularly familiar with, improvising with smiles and waves seems to work well until princess Caralane shows herself. Showing jekel and hyde personalities the very sight of the princess causes them to instantly attack, with ten flying back to the city for reinforcements while the remaining eleven blast her with multiple dragonflames, leaving her charred and very annoyed.

Joining the combat the party retaliated with a vengeance, cursing one blind and another with muscle spasms, firing poisoned and magical bolts and arrows in abundance. Realising they we had the advantage in ranged combat three charged the doorway, only to be brought up short by a wall of thorns, which snagged two of their carpets leaving their owners to spiral away to the desert some hundreds of feet below while the third partially made it through. After we had wiped the blood off ourselves and pulled his shredded body fully through the wall we drove off the few survivors by firing out the window he had made.



It seems the helm is getting hungrier every time it is used, Berhnard landing us into the side of a dune once the combat had finished where he collapsed with multiple grievous injuries, the princess estimating he will need two weeks to heal fully. While the troops, under the oppressive heat of the midday sun, buried the few exposed regions of the arc and Robert played with the blood we noticed the magi with muscle spasms was still flying while hanging onto his carpet by his fingertips.

Vivian and Stardreamer after some clowning about, rescued him by turning both him and his aggressive, lightening bolt casting, flying carpet into a nice carpet snake. Stardreamer then decides to show his flying skills, flying upside down over the desert before doing a barrel roll and scraping the top of a dune, circumcising himself in the most painful way imaginable. Divination of the carpets shows they contain imprisoned air spirits (GTN) and need force of will or their true names to control, the staff allows two casts of moderately ranked dragonflames and lightening per day.

As night falls it gets freezing cold and those on the early morning watch notice three phalanxes of maybe eighty men each flying about the desert with lights shining down onto the sand. Suspecting they are using locate to track down the bodies and dropped carpets we summon a huge sand storm which completely buries the ship, hides our tracks and inconveniences their rescue party.

25th Day of Spring

Leaving Hawatts men to clear a passage out through the buried top hatch Vivian begins interrogating the snake/magi with Mira translating. Now normally I find such things distasteful but I must say there are few things which bring a party together like torturing small helpless animals, a true social gathering ensues with the master torturers providing helpful suggestions such as describing what the implements do before using them. It seems that the bendy probe with a little hook at the end is for tearing tiny bits of flesh off as it hurts more than cutting and leaves the nerves intact and exposed, but I digress.

Joe is the magi's name and he becomes very informative, giving us the names of the cities and several which we didn't know of along with the numbers and types of troops arrayed against us. After stopping him praying to his god by applying red hot needles he helpfully tells Mira the true name of his carpet amongst the inane babble of screams. Elves are apparently thought of as an accursed race here, to be wiped out and exterminated whenever found which is why they attacked princess Caralane, they are not on good terms with the empire of Sho-I-ya to the north over the sea either.

The two craters Kondelarc and Sandelarc are not entered by their peoples as no-one has returned who has, we decide to explore them as these could be ideal places to hide the worms if we can overcome whatever dwells within them. Lord Kirrian seems to think this is a good idea and lets us know the worms should be big enough to look after themselves in a years time.

Practicing with the flying carpet, which is quite pleasant but peeved at having elves sitting upon it we enjoy a leisurely flight half way to Sandelarc. Unfortunately the carpet goes slower the more weighed down it gets and requires to stop and pray for an hour in the morning, lunch time and during the afternoon which doesn't help with our speed.

Stopping for the night it gets unbelievably cold and so only those who don't burn manage to sleep, snuggling up to the bound fire, while the remainder rest and shiver. Three druids and their nine giant attack scorpions attack during the night, with Sooty being badly injured in the fracas before we defeat them, capturing only two druids alive.

Some recreational torture of the snake'd druid reveals he is from Tzhanah and they were sent by the lord of the region to kill us, he seems unsure as to why, but I probably has something to do with the racial hatred between the local elves and humans.

Our ancient invocation to Sooty's master, Grand duke Havares to try and get him resurrected is disrupted when a chocolate skinned elf drops from the sky and asks us politely to stop. His name, Pe means "Spirit of the running water" and after introductions he invites us to travel to his wonderful jungle home to the south, where the daemons and dragons live. Being down on fatigue he asks if he can have the human earth mage we were going to sacrifice as a hot meal, agreeing he shows us the refined cultural heritage of the elves, eating the tender pieces of the still beating heart and drinking the blood within, unlike the elvendar elves however he claims that he can gain mana through eating hearts rather than merely pleasure.

Constructing a beautiful model arch from wet sand, he performs a ritual which opens a portal hundreds of miles distant through which we travel. Discussions with the Shatan as they call themselves reveals that the god of Miloo defeated all the deamons and angels some ages ago and now rules over Miloo. The Shatan evidently listen for people invoking the names of the defeated ones, which they refer to as slackers, as evidently humans occasionally turn from worshipping the one god of Miloo and they help educate them in the dark path, balancing the power of the one. While sooty is resurrected by one of the elves we learn that Sandelarc is actually a perfect place for the worms and has a evil reputation due to the elves using it as a picnic area where they devour masses of humans captives periodically.

Sooty is healed and bathes naked at the insistence of the 'male' healer while we negotiate an agreement whereby the party employer and house Grenhythe's humans will be placed under their protection to farm worms in return for worm by-products which the elves may be able to use to power their magic instead of eating human hearts. The flying carpets they claim were stolen from them so we return them and are each gifted with some arcane knowledge before returning via portal to inform Lord Kirrian and Hawatt of the proceedings to their delight.

26th Day of Spring – 40th Day of Spring

We train with the beautiful and cultured, in a evil sort of way, elves discussing our plans for returning to Elusia by travelling across the ocean to the north to the empire of Sho-I-ya where a portal exists. They offer to form a portal for us to journey to the capital of the empire rather than attempting the ocean which they have placed a barrier upon to stop the human fanatics from crossing in masses and wiping them out. Evidently it takes over six months to cross due to the confusion spell upon the ocean. The elves here are cursed by the one as they remained neutral in the war against the deamons, this stops them casting the powerful magic they once did and has forced them to eat human hearts to be able to perform their magic.



Spirit of the Running water

41st Day of Spring

Travelling through the portal we arrive in the splendid imperial gardens in the dead of night. Flying into the city berhnard lands us on a roof of a large warehouse where the skiff should be out of sight and not frighten the locals while we scout. Our plan is to try and steal the local 'great' library so the guild will have at least some information on the plane, however our scouting is futile as the people only speak Reichspiel and a smattering of Orcish. Common appears to be the local thief toungue spoken by halflings however, not having any thieves and scouting the higher class neighbourhood we found no speakers.

Vivian and myself give up on finding out the location of the library from the four courtesans we hire and settle down to a pleasant evening where talking is unnecessary as the remainder of the party scout out a nearby tavern. The barbarians Mira and Robert caused a barroom brawl while there with Robert being severely beaten, and Sooty was mistaken for a priest, receiving gifts of money all night. What we did find out is that Elves are mistaken for orcs and fed raw meat, Orc are a pathetic variety having their tusks pulled and are the priesthood, receiving alms in return for prayers. Orc conversation hence tends to revolve about the scriptures, although they do seem quite competent in breaking up brawls, much to Roberts good fortune.

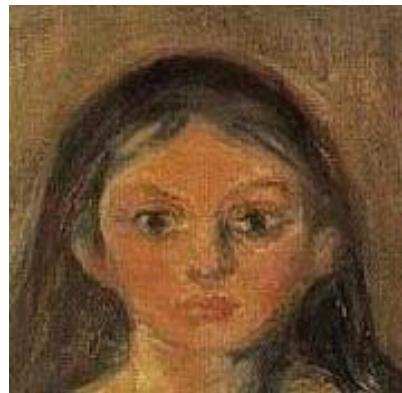
42nd-49th Day of Spring

We give up on being able to successfully seal the library and so travel to the city of Gottersegnend where we contact Alia Albrecht, a secretly Elusian trained illusionist and arrange travel back to Elusia for 666 gold each. While the others train, some digging about with gold coins also uncovers the fate of Sir Mortimer Carringsbrook, the dukes lackey who was stood on by a golem while with a previous party, he is now a were and joyously running with a pack of handsome bitches in the Neuforest. I purchase what books about the plane for the guild library to provide detailed research material for future adventurers.

50th Day of Spring

We return to the guild via portal using a dial-up device for transportation where we do a treasure split.

Adventurers



Mira Stuart

StarDreamer, an elven mage who carries a michaline sword on his back as a trophy, and the skull slightly better concealed. Positively crackling with power he can kill with a gesture and strikes terror into our enemies hearts.

Sooty, A elf going by the nom de gurre of Sooty, he is covered in ritual burn scars, most probably from one of the many elven baby eating cults. Hiding his real name he is possibly another noble runaway from up north where the elves potter about, although I prefer the rumour that he fled elvendar after his parents died in a fire started by agents of the queen after he spurned her advances.

Flame, Several sentient fires bound with the blood of dwarven children are stored up Vivians nose and are helpful in starting campfires, incinerating bodies and generally being hot and burny.

Arnaud de Montfort Esq, Your friendly scribe.

Robert MacLeod, Another Calidonian émigré, born on the shores of Loch Dunvegan, he is our party leader and disgusting jobs man. A trusting and gentle soul, he obviously was not traumatised enough during his apprenticeship, fortunately it seems Vivian and Princess Caralane have taken it upon themselves to amend this.



Princess Caralane