

# The Demon's Melody

A MyWorld Competition entry - November 2020 Quest for The Harp

## Backstory

The King's magician died whilst experimenting with a spell to change base metal to gold. The only witness to the event was his apprentice - who despite orders to the contrary was spying through a keyhole.

What he reported - when he had recovered from the injuries he received in the ensuing magical explosion which destroyed his master's laboratory - was that a figure stepped up behind the magician, seemingly from nowhere and waved his arms just as the magician was uttering the final syllables of his spell. The room was plunged into darkness and then a moment later, brilliant golden light burst forth from the crucible holding the subject of the experiment and a ball of fire engulfed everything, splintering the door the apprentice was kneeling behind and hurling him down the corridor in a storm of whirling, jagged timbers. In that momentary flash the apprentice could only see his master - his hands raised before his face, a look of shocked alarm upon his face. Of the other figure there was no trace.

After a period of mourning the King invited all the magicians, wizards and sorcerors in the land to present themselves at court, to apply for the now vacant position of King's Magician.

There was no shortage of applicants - the generosity of the King to his retainers was well known, and the prestige of the post was unparalleled.

Applicants had to demonstrate their prowess, as well as pleasing the King. Not with simple sleight of hand or mesmerism. Pulling rabbits from a hat simply would not cut the mustard.

One contender created a never emptying glass. Poor research led him to opt for a never-ending flow of red wine. The King's favourite tipple was dark mead.

Another created a magic fan that would waft cool, scented air. Another contender sneakily nudged a brazier in the way and the fan blew hot fumes from the brazier into the king's face - singeing his carefully manicured beard.

Other entrants were a magic pear tree which, whilst it had wondrous, sweet fruit also littered the floor of the court with dead leaves, a harp that would play sweet melodies and a marionette which would dance upon command.

The crafter of the marionette got the job.

The maker of the harp took offense and vowed revenge. He would alter the tunes the harp played and cast a spell that the king would forever hear the music. Let him try to rule then!

And when King and kingdom were on their knees, then he would appear at court with his harp and let the King beg him to stop the music.

He went away to carry out his devilish plan, and right enough the King was driven mad by the music in his head. His courtiers too could not rid their ears of the terrible, clashing chords. The kingdom quickly fell into chaos.

As ever in such situations the lords of the land vied for power and neighbouring states quickly annexed the outlying counties.

The castle was abandoned and what was once a proud country fell into lawlessness.

But either the sorcerer lost interest or something went very wrong, for the sorcerer never did return to court to see the King grovel.

In deed, he was never heard from again.

The apprentice, now an old man lives in a small house in the village and spend his evenings in the local tavern - The Blue Boar.

That is where the game starts.

The player is an itinerant swordsman, seeking employment, adventure, and hopefully - wealth.

He is in the tavern, talking with the apprentice - now nicknamed Jake the Peg, because of his missing leg.

## **Story**

The game begins in the Blue Boar Tavern.

The Apprentice, (called Jake the Peg) - now middle aged and one legged tells the player the story of the kingdom's fall. He points him to the librarian.

The player must visit the librarian who will relate more of the story and give the player a scroll in a foreign language. He points the player to the scribe.

On the way to the scribe's house the player is waylaid by bandits.

In the scribe's house, the scribe translates the scroll which points the player to a Register of Magic Users which used to be in the castle library. That tome is needed in order to identify who might be to blame for the curse. The player returns to the tavern.

Back in the tavern the player meets Slim Simon, an adventurer. He has a tale to tell, says he's looking for a treasure nod,nod, wink wink.

Jake the peg is there and has remembered some more info. Suggests the player go to the castle and gives him a key to the castle cellars.

The castle is mostly empty but a group of bandits has moved in to the cellars. The bandit leader drops a crown when he is killed. This is the treasure that Slim Simon has come to find.

Elsewhere there is a locked door.

When the player goes back to the Tavern he again meets Slim Simon and can trade the crown for the key to the door in the cellars.

The door in the cellars leads to the caverns. In here is a mushroom/mould invasion. Deep in the caverns is a chest with the Register of Magic Users and another scroll. The player must take it to the scribe to translate. He reveals the identity of the sorcerer and that the scroll is an encoded map. He translates it and sends the player to the Geographer.

The Geographer reveals the map as a path to the home of the sorcerer - through the boglands.

The boglands are murky and misty, twisted dead trees, patches of thorny undergrowth, infested with swamp dwellers. Defeating the Bogmaster opens the portal to the sorcerer's demense.

The sorcerer, at present is old, grey and withered, stripped of power by the demon he sought to control, to play the harp for him and send the king mad. The portal behind him - which he says leads to the demon's demesne by way of the lava fields, is closed. The sorcerer will be able to open it for the player, if the player can wrest the ruby which keeps the gate closed from the breast of the demi-god Anubis, whose undead minions fight those of Horus in the world below. The sorcerer promises to destroy the harp and lift the curse if the player will bring the harp to him. He himself is too weak for the trial.

Once the ruby is returned, the portal opens and the player can step through into the land of the lava pools, infested by fire sprites. From there the player can travel to the Demon's demesne. This is a mountain path leading to the flooded floor of an extinct volcano. In the middle of the pool, a whirling portal, reachable only by a narrow bridge takes the player to the Demon's Tower, and here the demon stands and on a pedestal behind him is the harp. Defeat the demon, *and a portal opens - back to the demon's demesne, where a portal gives access to the lava fields and from there the player can return to the sorcerer(or a portal opens straight back to the sorcerer's room)*, who - of course - is now returned to his full power and reneges on his promise - so the player must kill him. Upon his death a new portal

opens which returns the player to the village, where Jake the Peg waits. Jake takes the hero, with the harp to a blacksmith who smelts the harp in his furnace. A portal opens which takes the player back to the village on a bright spring morn. Jake the Peg tells the hero that the music is gone, the land has awoken, Spring has sprung and all is right with the world. He says the Hero should visit the new King for his reward. As the player passes through the castle gates he is portalled out of the game with a suitable text.