

The Summoning

Dark clouds filled the moonlit sky as a figure hobbled through the forbidding forest of Mordrea, a once prosperous barony on the frontier of the kingdom of Thyrinia, now in ruins caused by The Great Goblin War.

The war was fought two years ago against the goblins and their lick master, which left most of Thyrinia's frontier land in ruins. Being almost bois of human life. Rogue wizards and the few remaining goblins have taken up residence in the devastated lands. Wizards, being hunted for the unholy arts, summon demons and other hellions, there in their quest for power.

A flash of lightening lit up the sky and revealed the deep lines of age on the figure's face. It was the face of a man, his eyes, a sea blue, widened as his cracked lips spoke, "Om-ee-dos-luth-ram-dom." The words echoed through the forest as he waved one hand at the tower in front of him.

The walls of the tower seemed to fall away to slowly form a doorway and the old man entered. Through a small dark hall he hobbled, one bony white hand clasping a pouch that hung at his side. He reached a set of stairs and stooped to peer through the darkened stairwell.

"Bok!" he barked, and torches lit up all around the tower.

Up the stairs he went, with the speed of a youngster. His mind holding to one thought, The Summoning. The stairs spiraled up past four levels until they came to a black door. The wizard stretched forth a hand with three-inch fingernails and scrawled an obscure symbol. The door slowly faded away and he entered as it re-formed behind him.

He stopped at a pentagram drawn on the floor with powdered chalk and reached into his pouch, pulling out the heart of a small child that was still beating, and held it out before him. His hand shook in anticipation as thoughts of the power he would achieve with a successful summoning. He raised the other hand over his head and rolled his eyes. As his words poured forth, his wiry white hair raised on end. His eyes began to glow as the dark power flowed through the channel created by his incantations filling him. His words seemed to carry into the distance. He released the heart and it floated over to the center of the pentagram. Sparks shot from the ground when it landed and the heart burst into yellow flames. The flames changed in color to blood red and then spread to cover the star of the pentagram. The flames consumed the floor, creating a hole. Flame leapt from the hole and a figure jumped up out of it. The figure was like a shadow, a hole in the world of mortals. Its eyes were blood red flames and it glared at the wizard. The wizard's words died away as the tremendous power that flowed through his body diminished and died.

There was a hideous screech. It came from the demon the wizard had summoned as it realized that it was trapped by the pentagram. The hell fiend pounded at the invisible barrier and darted in every direction trying to find a way to escape. The hole in the floor disappeared as if it had never really existed.

The Summoning
By Jeffrey C Davis

The wizard examined the hell fiend and then let out a cackle as he turned and walked to the opposite side of the room. A smile formed on his face as the thought of the power to be gained drifted through his mind.

The demon scowled and hissed, scanning the wizard's laboratory for some means of escape, and its eyes fell upon a little white mouse scrounging for food.

The master of the tower had been working tirelessly on a project and hadn't stopped to eat in days, so there weren't any crumbs for the mouse to eat. The mouse saw a chunk of cheese across the room and dashed toward it.

The wizard walked over to a cabinet and drew a large gem from a drawer. He then turned and hobbled back over toward the demon with a crooked grin. Suddenly, a white object darted out of a corner and headed straight toward the pentagram.

"No!" rasped the wizard as the mouse crossed the powdered circle and broke the barrier.

Glancing up to eye the demon, the wizard saw nothing, but from the floor came a snarl. The mouse had been transformed into an eight-legged beast, a foot and a half long, by the demon. Pointing a finger at the beast the wizard shot a small ball of flames, which consumed it.

Quickly the wizard turned and scanned the room. He spied an inky smoke slithering across it. The smoke reached the opposite side and condensed into a human-like form. The form was that of the demon, who directed its flaming eyes at the wizard. A screeching laugh rang from its body as the demon rejoiced in its freedom, and the knowledge that it would soon have a soul to devour.

The wizard's eyes flew wide with astonishment, then narrowed as he raised the gem over his head with both hands.

"Dok-um-ran'-so-mee," he began to chant.

The demon fell silent, as it knew the wizard was attempting to complete the binding ritual, which would give him its power.

The strange power filled the wizard's body once more as the demon lunged at him for its only chance to survive.

The sun shined brightly on the tower the next morning. The forest didn't seem so forbidding, only strangely silent. The tower loomed over the tress, its black stones strangely dulled and almost gray in appearance. Anyone looking at the tower would clearly see only one window forty feet up, and the room behind it, both lit by the sun's rays.

With its shelves filled with potions and books, the room appeared to be a wizard's laboratory. There were large tables gilled with flasks and beakers, a desk and chair, and a large cabinet. The most obvious sign that it was a wizard's laboratory was the pentagram on the floor, drawn there with white powdered chalk, which had one break in its circle made by a mouse that was nowhere to be seen. The oddest thing in the laboratory was a robed figure sitting in the chair at the desk. Skeleton hands rested on the chair's arms. Though the head was covered, the chest was bare. It was a skeleton's chest, and the ribcage encased a human heart that was still beating.