



Act II
Scene 1

Greatest Architects

Author: Daniel Fearnley



My pilgrimage along the coast of Myon followed a well-worn trail, weaving between the needletrees atop the cliffs. The sun had not even finished its ascent when Castle Lyre appeared in the distance, a glorious, colourful collection of spires sharpened to spearpoints and threatening to pierce the cluster of clouds above it.

Over the next two days it drew nearer, and the stories of Lyre other wanderers had shared with me in Myon ran through my mind again. It was a stronghold of pirates, constantly bickering over their tenuous alliance with the less flamboyantly-dressed - and far more ruthless, if the tales were true - neighbouring pirates of Durmstrog.

The border between Lyre and Myon was like a wall of wood - it looked as though the inhabitants of Castle Lyre had not cut down a single needletree in the last century. My first thought was of a possible affinity for nature mentioned somewhere in the Lyre pirates' code, but as I quickly realised, the thick foliage put up a formidable defence. Every movement had to be carefully planned out, lest I receive a needle in the eye for my efforts. When night fell, I took up camp rather than attempt to continue in the darkness.

I approached the spires as the sun rejoined the sky, but the guards of Castle Lyre did not appear to be defending their fortress so much as simply standing near it. About five of them, all dressed in mixtures of different bright colours, were sitting and laughing around a large barrel covered in empty mugs about ten metres from the gate. One of them looked unconscious.

Not wanting to ambush them, I shouted out a greeting from the end of the tree line. "Sirs! Forgive me for disturbing you on such a fine morning."

All heads turned towards me, but the low talking continued. One of the women raised a hand to hush the others. "There's nothing to be forgiven. All are welcome in Castle Lyre, home of the free."

"Your offer of hospitality is gracious, but I'm afraid I'm only passing by," I said as I stopped beside them. "My travels in the desert put me somewhat behind schedule."

"A shame," said the woman. "You won't join us for a drink? Norris here was just telling us about the tale of Lord Magreillum and Lord Peritto. You know, the watchers of the east and west coasts of Yorovash. Which was which again, Norris?"

"Don't 'member," muttered Norris, a bald giant exploding from his comically tiny blue vest. "Not too friendly to us type, tho'."

I smiled and bowed. "I will leave you to your drink. Good day, my friends." But making no assumptions, I kept one hand on the knife under my coat as I strolled by.



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