



STRANGE AEONS

version 5.5

A 5-Episode Partial Conversion for Ultimate Doom or Doom II

By Impie

(mikemacdee at yahoo)

Made for ZDOOM

STORY

The call from Miskatonic University's archaeology department was brief:

"The department sends its condolences. We appreciate the work you've done in spite of your loss, but we strongly urge you to take the leave of absence offered to you."

"Is there an 'or else' in that request somewhere?" you said.

"No, no, of course not. If you find your work therapeutic in these trying times, then by all means...Uh, but a vacation might do you some good. You're our best researcher and we would hate to lose you for any length of time should you, uh...overwork yourself."

"I haven't had a breakdown yet. Time away from the campus is all I need."

"How goes the translation of the Kadath tablets, then?"

"I'll call you as soon as I have any updates."

You hung up before he could offer his condolences for the hundredth time, and turned to stare at the tablets.

They sat on the coffee table: ancient and alien, carved from some sort of sandstone that was thus far impossible to analyze, according to the geology department, and strangely warm to the touch, as if they were alive. There were four tablets in all, each covered from end to end in hieroglyphics only vaguely similar to those found on the Rosetta Stone. Normally they wouldn't be permitted to leave the university, but given the fact that you were the one who found them at the dig site -- and given the recent loss of your son, David -- the dean had no objection to your taking them home for study. Losing yourself in your work kept your mind at ease when your mother died, so you thought perhaps it would be the same with your son.

The dream visions said otherwise.

It was always the same dream: a vast, beautiful city of ancient legend, like the lost cities of Greece or Babylon. The white marble buildings gleamed in the perpetual morning sunlight, and the trees were lush and green and danced in a calm breeze. The streets were populated with throngs of young, beautiful people in fine silk robes. David was among them, speaking cheerfully with a lovely young lady who laughed at whatever story he was telling her. He seemed happy, at peace. This dream haunted you every night for the past week, and it seemed that the more time you spent in the company of the tablets, the more vivid the dream became -- so vivid that you began to feel as if you had actually *been* there, if only for a moment.

The last dream convinced you of this as your son looked up suddenly, saw you, and seemed surprised. As with the other dreams, you awoke weeping.

You began conducting research on the gods of sleep, learning how to speak to them in prayer. For several nights you prayed to them, begging them to tell you where this city was, and how to reach it. Your prayers went unanswered, and the dreams abruptly stopped.

However, your obsessive translation of the Kadath tablets has given you insight into the Dreamlands, and how to travel between worlds through your dreams. Tonight you embark on a dream quest to find your lost son, caring little for the dangers you may face along the way. After all, no one can die in a dream...can they?

OVERVIEW

As the Traveler, your task is simple: survive a dream odyssey across several fearsome realms from the darkest corners of the cosmos, where even the gods fear to tread. Each environment consists of eight maps, plus one secret map, and is populated by scores of nightmarish critters out for your blood. Find the big, humming slipgate at the end of each map to escape!

You must have The Ultimate Doom in order to play Strange Aeons; if you run it with Doom II, you'll need d1gfxd2.wad to supply the missing textures, which is included in the download as a separate file. This is an atmosphere-heavy mod, so turn off the music and dim the lights to maximize the experience. It is intended for the ZDOOM source port with mouselook enabled; it has not been tested otherwise.

For the ultimate challenge, play on Ultra Violence and pistol start each map.

ORIGINAL EPISODES

Every episode features its own unique environments, quirks, and dangers, so the tricks that helped you survive the last episode may not help you in the next one.

EPISODE 1: THE SHATTERED CITY

Whatever world these towns belonged to is long gone now, reduced to a million broken fragments drifting aimlessly through the aether of space. Its populace is mainly comprised of fire-spitting devils and dimension-traveling gunmen from Leng. Keep clear of the ledges: falling into the aether has jarring side-effects, and you may end up in a worse place than you started!

EPISODE 2: THE STAGNANT FORTRESS

Rusted and dilapidated, this city-sized hulk is home to ungodly science experiments and bone-grinding torture machines. The halls echo with the screams of the damned and red alert sirens that cry out to no one. Here the environment is as treacherous as its inhabitants, but you may find some ghoulish allies to lend a hand on occasion.

EPISODE 3: THE LAND THAT TIME FORGOT

Human eyes were never meant to witness this sprawling palace of prehistory: it belongs to barbaric lion men and blood-swilling undead, all of which see your presence as a blasphemy to the natural order of the universe. Health and hope are woefully scarce here.

EPISODE 4: THE PLATEAU OF LENG

Few have ever visited this icy nightmare realm and lived to tell about it, and those few have been reduced to babbling lunatics. They say Nyarlathotep, the Crawling Chaos, dwells here -- pray to the gods that you never cross paths with him!

BONUS EPISODE: OUT OF THE AEONS

Years after the conclusion of your dream quest, your sister becomes worried about her teenage son Daniel, whose artwork has become nightmarish. The boy suffers from night terrors and speaks of abominable things seen in his dreams, and on several occasions has temporarily disappeared from the house despite being blocked in his room to prevent sleepwalking. You yourself are disturbed by the Cthulhian imagery of the boy's art and dream visions, and offer to stay the night and help the boy sleep soundly, in actuality hoping to share the boy's strange dream visions and get to the bottom of his malaise. Trouble begins when he vanishes into the Dreamlands that night; failing to keep up, you take a detour to the Underworld, hoping the ghouls will help you recover Daniel's trail.

The ghouls already know about your crisis when you arrive: the boy's dreams are a portent, his keen mind seized by Great Cthulhu, who is on the verge of awakening as his sunken city of R'lyeh begins its rise to the surface world. He is using the boy as an anchor to the waking world, and once he awakens, so too will the other Great Old Ones, who will come to reclaim planet earth and leave humanity in ruins. Only through an expedition to R'lyeh can you hope to awaken Daniel and send Cthulhu back to his eternal sleep.

Out of the Aeons is the fifth and final episode, featuring 9 new levels and spanning two new ghastly environments.

THE UNDERWORLD

A subterranean realm only briefly visited in Episode 2, you must now become intimately familiar with its hideously ancient stones and black, beast-infested catacombs. No human was meant to tread here, but the local ghoul faction is willing to lend you a hand...until food becomes scarce, that is.

THE SUNKEN CITY OF R'LYEH

The demonic undersea metropolis of the vile Deep Ones, a sprawling temple dedicated to the unholy trinity of Dagon, Hydra, and Great Cthulhu. The only solace you will find in its treacherous halls is the sweet release of death.

NEW WEAPONS

SCEPTER OF SOULS A souvenir from a dubious archaeological dig, this evil weapon saps the life force of your target at short range. It takes its time devouring its prey, but it is always at your side and requires no ammo.

AK-47 Your main weapon. It dishes out a lot of pain in a short time, but chews through ammo like a teething puppy.

IMPALER This ancient arbalest carries a horrific power allowing it to fire an infinite supply of infernal bolts. Despite its fearsome appearance, its bolts do little damage, but a single shot can pierce an entire wave of monsters.

YITHIAN LIGHTNING GUN This mysterious alien weapon makes short work of any monster...if you can *find* the damn thing....

NEW POWERUPS

AMMO SPHERE Unlimited ammo for all weapons.

RAGE SPHERE Doubles your firing rate. Combine it with the Ammo Sphere for ultimate mayhem!

MUTANT SPHERE Temporarily hulk out and smash monsters with your fists! Use it for an emergency health boost, but be warned: hulking out reduces your armor to kevlar rags.

BESTIARY



Machinegun-toting maniacs patrol the Shattered City in droves. Once they take aim, you'd better take cover.

Fast, aggressive, and packing deadly shotguns, the Men from Leng are bloodthirsty hunters who haul their squirming victims back to their icy homeworld.



Devils are the violent and cruel cousins to the Imps. One Devil is worth a handful of Imps where firepower is concerned; one squad can fill an open area with wall-to-wall fireballs, and they practically live out of their sniping roosts.

Flayworms are named for their disgusting habit of slurping the flesh off their prey's bones. They are surprisingly speedy and travel in herds.



Supposedly when the unspeakable Abhoth gives birth, the Flesh Spawn are the noxious placenta that's left over. They are driven only to eat, mobbing their unfortunate meal with several dozen gnawing mouths.

Your dreamscape is crawling with malicious Nightmares that lurk in the shadows, only showing themselves long enough to tear out your eyes.



Grells are foul flying creatures that subdue their prey with toxic globs of slime. This secretion both poisons and slows their prey, making them easier to catch. Grells are known for their tough, leathery hide and their buoyant flight patterns which make them hard to hit.

Demon Wizards weave through the sky like flying barracudas, raining unholy magic down upon their victims' heads.



The Spawn of Glaaki are tentacled, slug-like abominations that hide in murky water like alligators, only surfacing to survey the terrain, or to drag their hapless prey to a nightmarish, slurping death.

Spiderbabies are the abominable marriage of alien flesh and unearthly metal. Their presence is always given away by their scuttle-stomping footsteps, and the whine of their laser cannons just before they lay down a volley of flesh-searing ordnance.



Death Incarnates are neither dead nor alive, animated by malignant Hades Spheres and driven to spread misery and discord. Be warned that destroying the beast's body releases the unholy sphere upon its attacker.

Fallen warriors are revived as skeletons by the heinous powers that rule the Underworld, driving them to kill and maim for all eternity.





Nemian Lions are the champions of Ancient Earth. These monstrous savages wield a variety of horrific powers and block your shots with their shields.

Though Ghouls are notorious maneaters, they are also sentient enough to recognize a greater threat than you, and may lend a hand during your dream quest.



Woe is he who encounters the Star Vampire. This invisible shambler from the stars can only be detected by its maniacal tittering...and its savage bite.

Colossal spiders dwell in the darkest corners of Leng, and evidence has shown their presence on Earth in prehistoric times. Their bite is deadly, and you have little hope of outrunning them once they smell your blood.



Dream quests have been known to draw the attention of Dimensional Shamblers itching for a good hunt. Space and distance mean little to them when their blood is up.



The Deep Ones come in many loathsome forms, and all of them thirst for the blood of surface-dwellers. Their fanatical devotion to the legendary Children of Cthulhu is matched only by their omnipresent numbers.



In the furthest recesses of the cosmos lurk eldritch beings too terrible to list here -- beings of which even the Mad Arab Abdul Alhazred was loathe to speak. Always be prepared, should your dream quest cross paths with these horrors.

CREDITS

Map Design & Story

Impie

Textures and Sounds

Chasm: The Rift

Texture Ripper

zrrion the insect

Additional Assets

zrrion the insect, JoeyTD, WildWeasel

Captain Ventris, Ghastly Dragon

Eriance, Blue Shadow, MagicWazard

Tormentor667, Virtue, Dr. Doctor

Vader, Gez, Melvin

Xaser, Icytux, Xim, Psyren

Captain Toenail, François-Xavier Delmotte

Music

Chasm: The Rift

System Shock 2

Death Mask

F.E.A.R

Intermission Art

Michael Whelan

David Demaret

Lee Edwards

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