

Lord Severin De Rondell

(1667.2)

You dream of mist. Pale pearlescent mist swirling between old stones. The mist coils and twists around the monoliths of pitted old stone, like fingers caressing a the cold, dead face of a drowned lover pulled from the lake. It insinuates itself everywhere, touching your face, your hands, your feet with the same insistent uncurious intensity it touches the old boundary markers.

You are suddenly seized with the certainty that you have forgotten something. Not something vital – not your name, or your mastery of magic, or where you laid your head last night but still something... important. As the mist continues to shift and surge you are struck by the awful realisation that you might have forgotten any number of things. How would you know, if you'd forgotten them? Could you mark an absence with any confidence?

YYou are alone out in the dark, under the moonless sky, who knows where, surrounded by walls of mist that press slowly, gently closer with each shallow breath you take.

It is time to move. You step forward, unsteadily at first and then with greater confidence, You cannot quite remember where you came from, how you got here, or where you are going but you know for a fact that you are going *somewhere* and that you will meet someone important there.

As you pass between the boundary stones – each one half a head taller than you, marked with a patina of the ages – you trade a muted outline of ... something... with your finger. You think it might once have been a crude carving of a deer, but now it is just blurred lines and the suggestion of a majestic rack of horns.

The stone is dry under your finger. You expected it to feel damp. Mist-soaked as it is.

There is a path once you are between the stones. The mist presses even closer, but stops at the edges of the path. Without quite registering, your mind accepts that there are tiny shapeless stones marking the edges of the path. Dozens of them, close enough that you could barely slip your thumb between them.

The path winds across the open plains. A cool breeze blows occasionally, whipping the mist into complex shapes, threatening to send it drifting across the boundary markers. Even without the wind it presses in close enough that you imagine you are in a tunnel made of white sheets and for a moment you have a sudden unexpected awareness of having been her before – of having a memory of having been in a place like this before now. Then the memory is gone.

The path winds, and you wind with it.

Finally, you come to a place. Ahead, through the mist, you see fingers of stone. Smooth, carved stone shaped by a knowing hand. Columns of white granite that thrust impudently up toward the invisible skies. You move faster. There is an unbidden awareness that you are not alone, that there is something in the mist that is not your friend. It is a half-remembered certainty, bubbling up from within you. A part of you questions that certainty – is it coming from some buried memory or is it coming from somewhere else?

The pillars mark the frontage of a cyclopean old structure. Carved steps pass between them, to an open doorway. Beyond the doorway there is light – silvery, shifting, not entirely welcoming. Cold.

You are in a great echoing hall – out of the mist at last although there is a peculiar optical illusion that makes you briefly question whether you are *really* out of the mist or whether everything around you – all the columns and stones and the half-visible statues of statuesque figures with ancient armour and the heads of glaring cats – are really there at all or whether you are still out in the mist.

There is a circular stone well towards one end of the great chamber, and you can see that the silvery light comes from it. Leaning over the well, peering into it, is a figure wrapped in a tattered white robe. They turn as you approach, with a gentle sound half surprise and half satisfaction. They seem familiar yet at

the same time you are certain you have never met them before. You would remember if you had – their features are very striking.

(Although, let us be clear, if you tried to describe them, any detail of them save their tattered white robe, you would falter after a moment and fall silent, frowning perhaps, wracking your brain for the right words and finding them eerily absent).

You talk, a little. About... things? About... is it magic? Is it about magic that you talk? It seems so immediate and intense in your memory – the knowledge that you spoke at length about arcane topics, both of you animated and excited. Yet when you try and remember exactly *what* you spoke about, when you try to summon back one word of it, it all falls apart in your hands.

After what seems like several hours of conversation, your host offered to share something with you. You remember nodding, and offering to share something in return (although you cannot quite remember what you suspect it was to do with the thing in the satchel at your side which up until this very moment you had forgotten you had with you, and now that you are awake you cannot quite remember what it was beyond the fact you were excited to share it with them). With one hand they reach down into the waters of the silver pool – like mercury, like quicksilver the waters ripple and flow – and draw up a handful, offering it toward you, perhaps to drink, perhaps to anoint yourself.

Then it fractures – all the liquid at once breaks apart in a thousand thousand fluttering wings. Ivory white, dust white, snow white, milk white moths. Untold numbers of them fluttering up from the figure's hand, from the well, a cloud of beating wings. They brush your face, leaving the finest tracery of mothpollen there. They crowd you, forcing you to avert your head, to cover your eyes. The noise is barely audible and thunderous at the same time. You dare not open your mouth for fear the moths will...

Effect

Until the start of the next Profound Decisions Empire event you can perform the rituals **Cast Off the Chain of Memory (Night/4)**, **Infant Starts with a Blank Slate (Night/12)**, and **Transmogrification of the Soul's Echo (Night/60)** as if you had mastered them; if you have already mastered this ritual, you may perform it as if you have one additional rank of Night magic, subject to the normal rules for additional ranks of lore. You should keep this vision and show it to a referee if you perform this ritual.

Roleplaying effect: When you wake up, you are aware that you have forgotten something. Something important, but you cannot (of course) remember what. That certainty will fade a little as time passes, but won't go away entirely until you next experience restful sleep.

Furthermore, for the rest of the day you will find that you have forgotten little details. Names, what you were planning to do, certain words. Your conversation will falter and fall silent, as the words you were about to speak run out of you like water from a sieve.

Aleksandr Zoravich Novosad

12200.1

You dream that it is twilight, and you are on a steep mountain path. It is difficult going. Sometimes you need to use your hands, as well as your feet, to move yourself forward – upward - along the rough, scrubby goatpath.

Ahead of you, along the path, you occasionally glimpse a figure in a cowled white robe. They are always just that little too far ahead of you to make out anything more than the robe, and they ignore your hails.

You press onward, ever higher, struggling up the path in the gloomy half-light. Occasionally, you are forced to clamber over slopes of chalk-white scree. Fragments of text are written on many of the stones, but you cannot make sense of them. Looking down, from the dizzying heights of the mountain, you see shadowed forests below. The forests are shrouded in fog, and in that fog you spy some great beast, shadowy and sinuous, gliding silently among the trees.

The Winter Lights dance and swirl across the horizon, brighter and more terrible than you have ever seen them above the western mountains of Skarsind.

As you climb higher, passing ancient and weathered statues of white granite. The statues are clearly orcs, but are too worn and broken to give up their secrets. There is a sense of immense age about them, which perhaps explains why their features have become so smoothed and cracked.

The path twists through craggy spires and jagged spikes of granite, ever upwards, towards the mist-shrouded summit of the mountain where a circular amphitheater awaits.

And in the amphitheatre waits an orc in cobalt-blue mage-armour carved with thumb-sized runes. His face is shrouded by a deep blue hood - only his eyes and his cruel mouth are clearly visible. Whenever you look away, even for an instant, his age changes. Sometimes he is young his eyes flashing with ambition. Sometimes he is mature, with a powerful mien, clearly used to command. Sometimes he is a wizened ancient hovering on the verge of death but possessed of a passionate intensity that unnerves you.

He speaks with an odd accent - despite the change in his appearance his voice remains the same - the dry scratching of a very old man.

From time to time, great white winged creatures flutter across the sky above - immense moths - casting their shadows down onto the amphitheater.

The orc greets you as a fellow explorer, a fellow warlock, but wastes little time on small talk. He offers you a seat beside him on the stone steps of the amphitheatre. He tells you he has a name but he cannot tell you what it is; he has given it up as all those who retreat from the slow erosion of the self that is life in the waking world must give up their names. He does not ask you for yours.

Your conversation darts from topic to topic. You talk about the stars; about their constancy, about the endless turning tale of years, and about eternity. You speak also of the mountains - their strength, their power, their sheer presence that warps the face of the world and dwarfs the ambitions of mortals. The way they mark boundaries – the grandest boundary stones the world knows – and the way they make a wall against the tide of change that otherwise sweeps everything away.

When he speaks, somewhat haltingly, about the perspective granted by immortality, there is a catch in his voice. Only hear do his words seem uncertain. He brags about avoiding ever having to learn what waits in the Howling Abyss, yet there is also a kind of yearning to him. The prospect of utter oblivion seems to call to him, and there is an edge of regret to him when he speaks of how he will never know its unmaking embrace.

After a moment of weakness, his voice becomes strident again, as you talk of power, of how all things stem from the possession of power. And that there is only one true power – the power to command others to do your bidding, and the power to increase your power as an end in itself.

The truest power is to be a god to others - to set the duration of their lives, to set their station, to command the ceremonies that define their lives as a beast keeper rules over the herd as a god. He strikes you as very cruel, when he speaks like this, but there is still something in his voice that makes you wonder how truly he believes what he is saying.

Your host is certainly aware of the fact you are speaking together in a dream, and he knows that you are a magician who has chosen to enter the dreamscape “through the copper door”. He says that he was once like you, and that he envies you the chance to see these sights for the first time. Yet as he says that his voice falters again. There is something else he wants to say, but when he opens his mouth, before he can speak, the roar of some great primaevil beast echoes across the mountains and he bows his head, his words unspoken, before gesturing for you to go.

You leave him, head bowed, looking at nothing, and then...

... you wake up. And for just a moment you feel alone – absolutely and profoundly alone as you have never felt before in your life. It is not good for orcs to be alone.

Effect

Until the start of the next Profound Decisions Empire event you can perform the ritual **Conclave of Trees and Shadow, Shroud of Mist and Shadow, and Thief's Arcane Gambit** as if you had mastered them; if you have already mastered one of these rituals, you may perform them as if you have one additional rank of Night magic, subject to the normal rules for additional ranks of lore. This is an enchantment. You should keep this vision and show it to a referee if you perform this ritual.

Roleplaying effect:

When you awaken, you are under a roleplaying effect that persists for at least an hour: it seems to be extremely foggy whenever you are outside under the open sky. You find it hard to make out details of things more than a dozen yards or so away. You may become distressed if people claim there is no fog.

In addition, as long as you are under the effect of this enchantment, you feel a strong desire for the company of others. Orcs or humans it doesn't matter – the idea of being by yourself for any period of time causes a surge of worry.