

Simargl

You stand on a mountainside, beneath a sky full of stars. The moon is a thin crescent like a cat's smile. The stars glitter like a liar's promise. The mountain rises from a great flat plain – or perhaps it is a sea? - that stretches as far as you can see. You feel a little exposed, the flatness of the sky and the flatness of the land around you mirroring one another.

There is a trail, and it seems rude not to follow it. Farmed with white stones it curves slightly upward. It's not unfamiliar to you, you've walked in a few times in this place, although it's usually flatter. It leads you into a gulley, a narrow opening between two stone walls that reach up until it disappears into darkness. At one point you have to turn sideways, the rough stone scraping against your back as you squeeze through.

Then it opens up, and you are in a valley, walking along the side of a bubbling brook. Moths the size of birds flutter by, singing quietly to themselves, dusting mothpollen behind them as they fly. Night blooming flowers open as you pass, ivory-white in the moonlight.

Ahead is an orc, sitting on a flat stone overlooking the stream. They wear a short orange robe, and a red loincloth, and their olive-green skin is marked with a network of spiral scars. They are stirring the waters with a long, smooth stick with a red stone at one end. They look up as you approach, and then look back to the water, disinterested. Put they pat the rock next to them, inviting you to sit.

You join them, and the two of you sit in silence for a few minutes, watching the faintly glowing red stone swirl the streamwater. A long red fish swims past, butting briefly against the rock.

The orc suddenly starts speaking, unprompted. They have an odd accent, and some of the words they use are very old, feel odd in your ears. They know you are a dreamer; they know that they are in the Dreamscape. They ask if you came through the gate in the Cave of Deep Slumber, and seem a little sad when you say you did not. They are fascinated to hear of the Somnolent Wanderer.

“It became a tradition for us. For the wizards of the sept, to go to the cave” they explain. “To step out of the world into eternity, to avoid the Howling Place. We'd hear the singing, hear the voice, and know it was time for us to go. Some of us the sept thought it was the voice of the ancestors calling us home, but we magicians knew better. The shaman warned against this place, but it was ours, and they didn't challenge us.”

He inclines his head towards a point on the other side of the stream. Three rough red stones stand there, one atop the other two, each shot through with seams of crimson tempest jade.

“But nobody came through after me,” he pauses for a moment bowing his head. “I have to wait here, you see, until someone comes to replace me. I have to watch the gate until I am freed to go out into the wider world like those who came before. Like the one who was waiting for me. But we can't leave the gate unwatched, because we promised.”

He gestures to the gulley through which you entered. “She went through there, the one who went before me, and she never came back. Why would she? One day maybe I'll accept nobody is coming, the sept is gone, time has eaten them, and I'll abandon my post and follow her. But not yet. For now I'm happy to sit here. To wait. It is restful, it gives me space with my thoughts I never had in the waking worlds.”

He chews his lip thoughtfully.

“I go over and sing, sometimes, through the gate but nobody answers. Nobody comes. Until you came, and not through the Cave of Deep Slumber. Will you sit with me, awhile?”

He falls silent again.

You sit together on the flat rock beneath the night sky, not speaking, watching the stream flow past, and the fish swim lazily, and after a time, there are fireflies.

Effect

Until the start of the next Profound Decisions Empire event you can perform the ritual **Align the Celestial Net** as if you had mastered it; if you have already mastered this ritual, you may perform it as if you have one additional rank of Night magic. You should keep this vision and show it to a referee if you perform this ritual.

Roleplaying effect: When you wake up, you feel rested and relaxed, but perhaps a little melancholy. You find yourself mulling over your legacy. What will be left of you when you finally leave the world behind? How will you be remembered? You feel a mild urge to discuss this theme, but only with your close friends.