

Somnolent Wanderer

Alternative

The moon is green, and hangs low in the western sky. A faint jade sheen seems to cover it, as if it is wrapped in leaves. Gazing up, for a moment, you fancy you can make out individual lengths of bramble bound around it. The emerald sheen does nothing to change the wan moonlight that drips and drops across the midnight forest. A great flight of moths, dappled red and green, drift through the night sky above, the moonlight glancing off their wings.

Your entire group is together – all six of you – standing on a paved road running between dark trees bearded with bark. There is movement all around. Sallow-eyed, whip-thin creatures peer at you from between the trunks, twitching out of sight again when your eyes rest on them for more than a moment.

You turn to the others to draw their attention to them and realise you are alone. A cloud of tiny moths swirls around you, and for a moment you imagine you can hear music, and then you forget there was ever anyone else with you.

The whip-thin, sallow-eyed creatures have slipped sloer. You can hear them faintly muttering and grumbling, a lifting-and-falling sound without words, ebbing and flowing like water on the seashore. There is something unsettling about the noise, but you do not sense that they are a threat – and after all you should be safe on the road.

Still, best not to risk unnecessary danger. There are two ways to go; you pick one and set off. After a timeless moment of travelling the trees fall away. You are now on a rough, rutted track through fallow fields. A web of fences, and hedges, and walls of flat piled-up stones stretches around you.

Ahead, a gate of woven wood that opens easily. A cottage – a little farmhouse – with dark purple and bone white flowers growing out of the thatch. A garden of marrowort and bladeroot stretches around one side of the cottage, in the centre of which stands a forlorn scarecrow of tattered sack-cloth, its blank turnip head topped with a sagging straw hat. The door of the cottage is closed, and there are no lights. But from somewhere nearby you can hear a voice – a man's voice – singing a song about a lost love and the golden fields of Hay.

Following the voice, past the herb garden, you find a barn behind the cottage. Lamplight spills out through the wide open doors, and the voice of the singer, but also a stream of effluvia and blood. You pause at the entryway, looking within.

Within is a big man, wearing a mask of straw and ivy in the shape of a smiling sun. He wears a short-sleeved brown robe beneath a leather apron that strains against his paunch and he is slaughtering pigs.

He seems to have been expecting you. He greets you warmly in a Marcher drawl, but makes no effort to put down his sickle or remove his mask. He mostly wants to discuss recipes for pig meat. Randomly he shifts track to talk about blood magic, and the use of

food and drink in ritual magic, especially magic that is about strengthening or enchanting warriors.

The lamplight dims. There's something disjointed about his conversation. Something is wrong here.

He invites you to dine with him “once the job is done” and you can talk about magic, and the next summit at Anvil, and share stories of your travels. The stench is overpowering. One by one the lamps flicker out, and darkness floods the inside of the slaughtering shed.

“Come back and see us,” he says in the dark. “I'll introduce you to my wife and my two beautiful boys. They'd love to meet you”

You awaken, suddenly. You have the horrible suspicion that you have misremembered ... something... about the dream but you cannot put your finger on what it was.

Game Information

Until the start of the next Profound Decisions event you can perform the rituals **Ruthless Vigilance, Healthy Crop (Winter/8)** and **Unfettered Anarchy (Night/10)** as if you had mastered it; if you have already mastered these rituals, 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.

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Marzanna Verchernyaya Zorya (5097.2)

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He turns away and slaughters another pig. The lamplight dims. There's something disjointed about his conversation. Despite his pleasant manner, you begin to feel increasingly anxious. Worried. Something is wrong here.

He turns towards the third pig, sickle moving quickly. He invites you to dine with him “once the job is done” and you can talk about magic, and the next summit at Anvil, and share stories of your travels. The stench is so bad now that you can barely breathe. Several of the lamps flicker out, and darkness floods the inside of the slaughtering shed.

The last light dies, plunging everything into darkness, apart from the cruel sickle of his bloody blade which seems to possess a metallic glow of its own. Then even that is gone.

“Come back and see us,” he says. He is suddenly behind you, the straw-and-ivory of his mask rasping against your ear. “I'll introduce you to my wife and my two beautiful boys. They'd love to meet you”

You awaken, suddenly, and can still feel his stinking breath on the back of your neck. You have the horrible suspicion that you have misremembered ... something... about the dream. It was pigs that he was slaughtering, wasn't it?

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Zoria (10516.1)

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The last light dies, plunging everything into darkness, apart from the cruel sickle of his bloody blade which seems to possess a metallic glow of its own. Then even that is gone.

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Vaclav Mladenovich Kosti (438.2)

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Nadya Aldona Straconeva (11898.1)

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Lutobor Branislavovich Glinka (9157.1)

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