

Simargl, the Empty One (269.1)

You are in a town, perhaps in the Brass Coast. The air is warm. Balmy. Dry. The sky is clear. The stars are like lanterns – red, orange, yellow, gold, ruby, topaz – scattered in a sea of ebony. They twinkle and don't even pretend to be fixed in place, shifting lazily even as you gaze up at them.

The buildings are sun-baked. Hold your hand an inch away from the whitewashed brick and you can feel the memory of noontide heat on your skin. They are flat-roofed – this place rarely meets the rain. There are plants growing here – in windowboxes, pots, and in little gardens on those same flat roofs. Night blooming flowers fill the air with a delicate, enticing, scent that lies beneath more usual scents of dust and smoke. Delicate but it makes your eyes itch.

You walk down a cobbled street towards the centre of town. Your throat feels scratchy. Your nose is running. Perhaps you have caught a cold? You can't remember the last time you experienced this kind of physical symptom when walking the Dreamscape.

Some of the buildings open onto the street, empty doorways yawning. Peering inside, you see no sign of people, yet you have the strong sense that this place is not unoccupied. Most of the buildings contain the typical furniture you would expect – tables, chairs, cupboards and the like. You decide against intrusion. You have a strong sense it might be dangerous to trespass.

Something rustles in the leaves of one of the rooftop gardens above you, but there is nobody to be seen. The jangle of windchimes comes suddenly from a nearby window, as if something had brushed against them.

ATCHOO!

A sneeze threatens to snap you in half. You gather your robes around you and increase your speed. It's a little difficult to see where you are going, your eyes are watering so much. A reservoir of snot has been pierced inside your head, and you have to keep wiping your nose. You sneeze again.

The centre of town is a pleasant circular plaza where a dozen crooked avenues meet. A white granite statue stands disapprovingly in the middle, in a low-walled pool. Stepping closer, you see that it depicts an older Freeborn woman with her arms crossed. On her shoulder is a cat – large as such creatures go. There are three others curled at her feet. There is a strong sense that this statue does not like you.

You sneeze again.

You have a horrible sense that your tongue has swollen to half again its normal size, and you want to claw your eyes out they are itching so badly.

From around the side of the low-walled pool comes a little white kitten. It steps delicately, tail insolently raised in the air behind it like a staff. It sits down, and licks its paw, cleaning it's ear.

You sneeze again, thunderously in the quiet. Then again. Then *again*.

You are horribly aware you are no longer alone. Dashing tears from your eyes on the sleeve of your robe, you glance around, trying to focus your vision.

There are cats *everywhere*. Dozens of them perch on every rooftop, staring down at you with judgemental eyes. They fill the crooked avenues. They sit on the lip of the pool. Dozens? Hundreds! Fur in a riot of colours surrounds you, and you can feel individual hairs settling on your robe, getting into your eyes and throat. Your throat feels as if it is swelling closed.

None of the cats move – apart from the odd cocked ear or swishing tail. They just stare at you. Weighing you up. Judging you.

You are vaguely aware that the statue has moved slightly. The white stone cat sat on the Freeborn woman's shoulder has tilted its head, opening eyes of living emerald, gazing down at you. You have more pressing problems however, as you are now struggling to breathe, practically blind, throat swelled shut, unable to even sneeze properly.

Before the darkness washes up around you, you get the intense feeling you have wandered into a place where you are very much not welcome.

For some reason.

Effect: Until the start of the next Profound Decisions Empire event you can perform the ritual Dreamscape of the Endless Hunt (Winter/30) as if you had mastered it; if you have already mastered this ritual, you may perform them as if you have one additional rank of Winter magic. You should keep this vision and show it to a referee if you perform this ritual.

Roleplaying Effect: When you awaken you feel awful – you have had a dreadful allergic reaction to something. Luckily the feeling fades fairly quickly once you can splash some water on your face.

While the enchantment continues you experience a roleplaying effect: you feel that you are being hunted by cats. You keep seeing them move out of the corner of your eye – never where you are looking always on the outskirts. They are tormenting you. Watching you. Preparing to strike. Some of the people you meet are clearly collaborating with them – they are cunning and dangerous creatures. At some point they will strike – a tide of fur and claws will overwhelm you. They hate you because you have seen through their facade of being friendly pets to the savage little hearts that beat in their wicked little chests.

Magdalena Teyhard von Holberg (641.1)

Something appears to have gone wrong.

Last night your sleep was wracked with unpleasantly lurid dreams. On awakening you can't quite remember what happened in your sleep – only fragments.

A dark forest, great bearded oaks. Fluttering wings, pale as milk. Moths. A single golden eye with a vertical black pupil staring at you. The sound of bone flutes, lilting and twirling.

Shadows cast on a cave wall by flighting flames. A coughing roar of a great beast.

Saltwater, the scent of it and the feel of it lapping against your toes.

Salt flats. The flight of cranes overhead.

A great sleek, blackfurred squirrel almost as tall as you are, observing you from the branch of an immense tree with clever eyes.

Drifts of snow, piling up against the side of a cottage.

A red star burning in the sky.

A mountain path, with crumbling statues of great serpentine creatures flanking it, leading up toward a flat space where someone...

The sound of laughter, and the beating of a drum. Spreading warmth filling your body and spirit.

Crunching autumn leaves. The smell of woodsmoke.

A lopsided scarecrow beneath a bloated orange moon.

A black cat washing it's paw.

The sound of wood creaking.

Merriment. A scream. The splash of something hitting deep, deep water.

A voice you have not heard in a very long time saying “No.”

And then you woke up. You woke up, but maybe you are still dreaming?

Effect: Something has gone awry. This enchantment only works properly on a character who has a rank of ritual lore. As a consequence, while the enchantment is still in place, there are no mechanical effects.

Roleplaying Effect: When you awaken you feel uneasy and unsettled as if you have not slept at all. Without warning you will be distracted by an intense memory of another fragment of your peculiar dreams. This effect will fade after an hour or so.

While the enchantment continues you experience a roleplaying effect: you feel that there is something you have forgotten, but you cannot remember what it is you can't remember.

Moco de Guillermo (5715.1)

In your dream, you are in a forest. Black trees crowd the edges of a path of silvery-white sand, bounded on either side by tiny black stones. You've seen this path before, you think. A long time ago as a child. A summer visit to a family friend. It was the path between the back door of their house and the tiny conservatory at the bottom of their garden.

With little alternative, you travel along the path. You are aware you are not alone. There are little figures in the trees – barely more than a foot tall – with spindled limbs of gnarled wood. You don't get a good look at them, but they appear to be wearing tiny bull skulls as helmets. Or else their heads are bleached-bone skull with curling horns.

You hurry a little.

The path curves slightly around and then you are standing before a large house – a mansion really. There is a door here, and as you approach you cannot shake the feeling that this too is familiar – but you can't place it. The door yields easily to your touch, swinging open welcomingly to let you in to a spacious hallway.

As you step across the threshold, you hear the tinkle of a bell somewhere nearby, nearly drowned out by a sudden thunderous rumble of drums that seem to come from all around. After that first outburst, the drumming continues, somewhere outside the house or deep in the depths it's hard to be sure.

The little bell rings again. Ears straining to hear it, you follow the sound down more hallways. The walls are decorated with dusty old mirrors, half-hidden behind gauzy hangings.

A final door opens into a large chamber, and you meet your host and the source of the tinkling bell: a young woman in severe black velvet, cut in an archaic style. She wears her long auburn hair pinned up with hundreds of tiny pearl-tipped pins. Her skin is smooth and lightly powdered - but when she frowns or smiles it is clear she is much older than she at first appears. She wears a single silver and emerald ring on her left ring-finger which she twists throughout the meeting. From time to time she rings a little steel bell and looks increasingly irritated. Incongruously, there is a constant background sound of drums which the woman appears unable to hear - or is intentionally blocking out. They appear to be Druj drums, if you are any judge.

Around you are scattered workbenches and tables, on which sit partially constructed music boxes. From time to time, your hostess will move to a table and pick one up, turning it over and over in her hands, and tinker with it for a moment before putting it down and rubbing her hands together.

Her conversation is a little disjointed - but it becomes apparent immediately that she believes it is some time during the reign of Empress Giselle. She believes that you are meeting her at her manor in eastern Rebeshof - she seems unaware you are dreaming her. Rather she seems to think you are an emissary of the Holberg senator here to canvas her vote for the upcoming election. She barely seems to hear what you are saying, filling in your side of the conversation herself inside her head. The longer you interact with her, the more disjointed she becomes. She often trails off in the middle of a conversation and picks up the

little steel bell, ringing it with increasing frustration as all the while the Druj drums beat in the background.

As your conversation draws to a close, she cocks her head to one side and complains that she can hear "that cat" again. She picks up her bell and rings it insistently. "Where is that slack boy!" she asks, rhetorically. "I've been ringing this bell for " She frowns, and trails off, and then blinks at you in some confusion. "Have we met?" she asks.

Effect

Until the start of the next Profound Decisions Empire event you can perform the ritual Hand of the Maker (Autumn/2) as if you had mastered it; if you have already mastered one of these rituals, you may perform them as if you have one additional rank of Autumn magic. You should keep this vision and show it to a referee if you perform this ritual.

Roleplaying effect: You feel constantly anxious and worried that you are in immediate danger. These attacks of anxiety last only a few moments, and are accompanied by the distant sound of Druj drums.

Zlata Ruznikova Perenel, The Weaver (8733.1)

In your dream, you are exploring a jungle oasis, haunted by parrots, and scattered with peculiar ruins. It is familiar, as if you have been here many times. You wander among the peculiar ruins, or swim in the cool crystal clear waters of the oasis, but after a time the dream shifts to something else.

A squat, shadowy figure beckons to you from between the trunks of trees suddenly grown impossibly tall. Oak trees, you imagine, their boles covered in thick green moss, utterly out of place in the jungle. Iridescent moths flutter in the air around you in great clouds, and long strands of faintly luminous grey lichen hang from the tree branches like spider webs. The forest floor smells strongly of rotting leaf mould and the ground is littered with mushy, fungus-covered logs.

The first figure is quickly joined by several others, and you are quickly surrounded by a band of them. They tug at your clothes, urging you to follow them through the woods - for the jungle, the oasis, and the ruins are all gone. As you move, they caper about, playing eerie and beguiling tunes on bone-white flutes. You are struck, perhaps, by the way you cannot tell quite what these figures are. Humans? Orcs? Strange hybrid creatures part familiar, part alien. They resist your attempt to codify them.

As the figures dance, more and more squat figures emerge from the dark boles of the oaks to join them, and you are swept along by them, along a path you know with the logic of dreams leads you towards the heart of the forest. Now and then the tree canopy parts and a glimpse of an unfamiliar starry sky can be seen. As the path twists and turns, the dancing becomes more frantic and uncontrolled, the tempo of the music rises, and the shadow people play shrill notes that disorient and confuse you.

As their music becomes more unsettling, you fancy that you see a pale, cowed figure moving between the trees, slowly drawing closer. Moths flutter all around them, sometimes so dense as to obscure them entirely. Their face is completely hidden beneath a veil, but you are left with the terrible gnawing certainty that they are looking for you.

Then you are in a clearing among the moss-shrouded trees, and the shadowy, cavorting musicians have disappeared. The woods feel familiar and strange at the same time, and in the middle of the clearing a lone figure is waiting for you. She is an orc. Every inch of her skin is marked with raised designs – scars that whorl and curve across her body in intricate sinuous lines. She wears a long emerald robe that drags through the mud as she moves, and a wide mustard-coloured belt into which are carelessly thrust a vicious looking dagger and a long rod of black wood wound with three serpents.

Her manner is cold, imperious even. She eyes you, calculating, as you approach. You face one another for a few moments in silence before one of you speaks. She has the attitude of a queen – someone used to having her commands obeyed without question. She knows that she is dreaming, and believes you are a dream spirit here to grant her knowledge of the arts of the twin serpents. First she interrogates you.

Are you a servant of red serpent? The slitherer, the dancer, the uncoiled, her soft scales glittering like embers and her eyes burn like flames. Will you teach her to shed her skin so that she is remade?

Or are you a servant of ebon serpent? The coiled one, who waits in the darkness. His scales smoke, night, and darkness, his eyes clouds, mist, and fog? Will you teach her to move quietly and cautiously until she is close enough to her prey to strike, or to catch them in her deadly crushing coils?

Or are you a servant of the one-who-is-to-come, the one-who-was, the one-of-two-of-one, the rainbow serpent who partakes of both madness and certainty, inspiration and chaos, and whose gifts will rework body and spirit alike?

She seems incapable of accepting that you are not a spirit of the Night realm. You do not think she sees you as a human – she would surely not be so forthcoming if she did – although quite what she sees is not apparent at all.

Whoever she is, she is a mystic. You recall little of the conversation – there is much talk of transformation, serpents, darkness, ambitious rivals, cruelty, power and its exercise, and the jealousy of those who do not possess esoteric power.

There is something peculiar about this figure, something nagging at the back of your mind. You are left with the unsettling feeling that she might not be a resident of the Dreamscape at all, but rather a being such as yourself – a mortal magician who has used magic to walk in this peculiar place. Yet at the same time there was something about her speech, her movements. Is it possible that this is an echo of someone walking the Dreamscape? And if so does that mean that you, likewise, leave echoes behind you when you walk in this place?

You awaken unsettled.

Effect: Until the start of the next Profound Decisions Empire event you can perform the rituals Shroud of Mist and Shadow (Night/10) and Distil the Serpent's Stone (Night/100) 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. This is an enchantment. You should keep this vision and show it to a referee if you perform this ritual.

Roleplaying Effect: You are experiencing a roleplaying effect that lasts for at least an hour: you hear hissing, and catch sight of movement out of the corner of your eyes. It is as if red or black serpents are hiding all around you, and you have only just become aware of their presence.

In addition, as long as you are under the effect of this enchantment, you feel a growing certainty that others are plotting against you, especially those who share your mastery of magic. They will not move openly against you, but you find yourself analysing their words and deeds looking for hints as to that form their inevitable betrayal will take.