

NPC File – Zola, Herald of Prospero

Stats:

2 Hits

Skills you are prepared to reveal:

Once per day can cast the ritual Conspirator's Cloak as a boon from Prospero

You can innately use the detect magic ability up to 3 times a day

Divinations: (if cast on you, these are the responses)

Quick Insight: Creature of the Realms

Ties that Bind: Herald of Prospero

Carries:

one piece of golden paper from Herald Verta – a means for sending a message to Prospero

two crawling spiders – another means for sending a message to Prospero

Timings:

6.30pm Friday evening until beginning of Conclave

10am – 11.30/1pm Saturday Morning depending on your other commitments

4pm/5pm – 8pm/9pm Saturday afternoon/evening

Recommendation: Use your Friday night time to make appointments to see people at other times, otherwise particularly Saturday morning you may find a lot of annoying walking around

Zola – an inspirational paragraph

***“Not many threads have been woven since the Herald Zola was created, but they are already being noted, their name whispered to the stones and streams of the City of Bridges, their own hand scratching it in ink on paper favours in every corner. And the brass halls of rumour shout that Zola clutches favours of many others in return. They are liked, their acquaintance courted, even by those of established tone and turn in the city’s passageways, as much as anyone is liked here, as much as any preferences can be trusted. They have a knack of being able to grasp another’s particular ambition quickly, a keen listening ear. And they are quick to offer their services. Something which – in this city – is rarely forgotten.*”**

No one is especially surprised that they are already a trusted scribe. And if it seems soon for them to be the Golden Prince’s representative in Anvil – well all are certain the Lord of the Loom knows what he is about”

Task 1: Faustus of Urizen (believed to be with The Scarlet Guard)

Finding Faustus:

- Probably in Urizen
- You sent him a letter asking him to leave a message at The Sentinel's Repose teahouse if he was going to be tricky to find so ask there for messages (Letter text as appendix)

Part 1: An apology.

- Trinket, an Autumn Construct (*it's a small goblin like puppet thing but I don't think Faustus ever met it so don't worry about descriptions!*) was supposed to be doing work for Faustus so that Faustus could focus on getting lots of battle rituals cast. The construct was called back to the City of Bridges and failed to inform Prospero that it still had a contract to complete. Zola has brought the money owed (equivalent to 3 seasons worth of Rivers of Gold ritual)

Hand over Three Thrones and Three Crowns in return for hearing about battlefield rituals Faustus has organised and cast.

Part 2: An encouragement.

- Based on what the last Herald Faustus spoke to (He was called Faure) You believe he should seek power or seek to control someone else who has power. Zola believes that means becoming or significantly influencing a Grandmaster or Autumn Archmage. That could be about continuing to ensure battlefield supremacy or it could be for any other reasons Faustus feels are important. You have Prospero's support in encouraging ambition. You are permitted to cast **Conspirator's Cloak** once per day (ritual on public wiki) And you intend to use it to aid Faustus in this task if you can persuade him to take it seriously. This is not a favour that needs to be repaid, it is a response to embarrassment over the contract that the construct Trinket failed to complete. You have leeway to cast/gift it on someone else of Faustus's choosing if Faustus can convince you of that person's ambition.

Once Faustus has found someone with political ambition and you have a sense that they are setting goals, cast Conspirators Cloak on them (if they're really not into it, save it back for the third task)

Part 3: A temptation

- If you manage to find someone via Faustus or otherwise with ambitions to be a Grandmaster or Autumn Mage, you'd like to tempt them with Autumn Vis as a powerful way of buying votes/influence whatever position or title. Prospero has given you a supply with which to make a deal
 - The terms of the deal are:

"Prospero will grant 30 Autumn Vis (equivalent of 90 Mana) to the individual who gets the following declaration passed in Conclave: "The Empire will gift a copy of A Mountain Remembers its Youth to a foreign nation of Prospero's choosing."

You have room to maneuver

- if they want to place stipulations about that status being foreign specifically at the time the ritual text is handed over rather than just when the declaration is passed you will agree to that.
- You will also consider continuing negotiations later if they are determined that Prospero must specify which nation before they agree to the deal, but your preferred outcome is with the nation unnamed. (ie if they'll only do it on these terms come back and get a decision from us which Nation Prospero wants)

They have room to manoeuvre

- If they ask for a full year to pick the best time to get the declaration passed you're happy with that – anything longer than a year is too long.

If anyone is ready to commit to getting the declaration raised within the time limit you can make a down payment of 10 Autumn Vis to that person.

IF you make a deal you should: hand over 10 Autumn Vis, find someone to record the terms of the deal in writing, get a copy for Prospero, and point out there will be consequences if they do not attempt it within the time limit. Don't worry too much if you cannot make this deal, Prospero is being opportunistic and will not be surprised if it does not come off.

Task 2: Gambling Debts and a Star

*There was a furore in the City of Bridges when it seemed that the star was lost from Prospero's loom, and the Winds of Fortune produced by Imperial Civil Services showed at the Autumn Equinox that it was in the hands of Imperial Citizens with no Autumn magic at all and on its way to Anvill. You are not a fan of Prospero's rage, and your ambition held in check you swung under the radar and made sure you were NOT charged with recovering it. **Herald Verta** was not so quick. They had a plan – but it clearly failed, and word has reached the Golden Prince that not only is the star still not returned, but it is in the hands of **Achilles of Damakan's Forge** who is one of the Imperial Citizens Prospero likes least.*

You could use a favour from Verta, so if you can, you're going to get the star returned to Prospero

- Visit Keelin Foxden of Navarr. Remind her of the meeting with Verta at the Equinox. Remind them that getting the star back to Prospero was a way they could clear all their gambling debts that Prospero acquired. (These Gambling Debts were incurred in many gaming houses in Temeschwar in the first place)
- Remind them that if there will be consequences if they do nothing
- Point out that rumours suggest that the star has been bought by Achilles of Damakan's Forge
- How does Keelin intend to get it back? Especially without Achilles knowing it is for Prospero?
- Verta would have offered no more help than this. You on the other hand, if Keelin shows ambition, can offer to introduce Keelin to anyone you have met that you think might support Prospero, and who might either have wealth or have a problem with Achilles. Obviously that's only if you happen to have met anyone that you IC believe will be useful
- Likewise if, later on, she is certain she can't get the star, you can talk with her about "what other favours Prospero might conceivably accept in return" – without offering suggestions, or endorsing her ideas, but just collecting that thinking. Warning also, that it might not be enough, is the star really so out of reach? Prospero is NOT unkind but does expect to be paid when he is owed.
- Give Keelin the golden paper so she can communicate directly with Prospero, but if there is good game in it, she can also seek you out and tell you about her progress
- Someone might show you the Star. You may need to pretend you don't recognise it – you'd be in trouble if Prospero found out that you let it slip that it was missing from the loom and wanted. But in the right situation you may want to identify it. It has a ribbon that says Rock Crystal and is no. 15608

Task 3: Looms, Patterns, Nets and Ambition

- Not long resident in the City of Bridges, freshly made by the Golden Prince, your ambition drives you, but you are built with subtlety too and are unlikely to ever be seen to vie too hard for a position as one of his most trusted nobles.
- You have heard that Prospero was impressed when Faure announced that he had set himself the task of mapping the Empire's political influencers a year ago, and disgruntled when after just one visit to Anvil Faure declared the place insufficiently stimulating. You have made no such announcements – and yet you will succeed.
- These are the questions you seek to answer. Which bodies have most power? How does the Empress manage to influence them all? Who should Prospero lean on if he wants things the Empire can offer? Who is ambitious enough for you to support and be congratulated for the support you gave when you later move to trading favours?
- How will you do it? You want to meet with people of influence. You can cite your role as a scribe in the City of Bridges as giving you insight into the workings of many who trade political favours. Your opinion is the thing you have to trade most of all. Some will value it, some will not. But to decide, they'll need to give you a chance to listen.
- You're not precious about your information. If you find people willing to work on it with you – so much the better. Prospero values communication and so do you. If being a Herald opens doors for you (you hope it will, but can't be certain) then you'll take others in with you
- You have a great belief in making yourself useful to people, as well as in mentoring people when they are starting out
- Some starting points: House of the Seven Mirrors; The Looking Glass (fashion carries politics); Circle of Zulgan Tash – one of their number controls new ritual texts, another is a Grandmaster; Is there an alliance of the more earthy nations against the more flamboyant? Who controls that; Which Earl has most influence in Dawn?
- Prospero doesn't deal a lot in coin, but we'll give you enough to buy any useful IC books in the field that might help you understand influence
- You can cast Conspirators Cloak once PER DAY. You owe Faustus or someone they support one casting if they want it, but you can use the others how you please

OOO Notes:

You have two particular people to find, with pieces of plot; and an interest in reporting back to the plot team things that we might do more Prospero related plot with – which predominantly relates to “helping people demonstrate Ambition” – your IC (but informed by OOC thinking) perspective on people who might respond well to plot related to Prospero.. and how you think the “net of heavens” is shaping up.

We struggle a bit with Prospero characters on the field, because the write up about bargains and favours on the wiki makes people try and make bargains with the Prospero Heralds. You are not – apart from your two specific pieces of plot and one offering per day of Conspirator’s Cloak – prepared to place any future favours from yourself or Prospero in order to get the things you want – because right now all you want is to find out who the ambitious are. Be resolute about this and focus on the “tempting people to greater ambitions” side of things.

Also – we give you quite a lot of leeway with these “in play for a lot of time” characters – but playing a Herald, you have to be a bit more careful than others. Your interest is in political connections, you relish ambition and have only two purposes in any conversation – to listen in case you hear something that will help you further your – or someone you might like to impress’s ambitions or in tempting someone to greater ambition. You can’t go off on other tracks with this Herald like romance, too much drinking and gaming unless it is 100% clearly tied to those first purposes. Additionally – the more established political players will be easier to find than the Newer ones. We’ll introduce you to the Egregore’s at Saturday morning briefing if you can make it (9am) so they can tell you of any newer groups you should particularly target.

Letter you sent: Don't worry about replicating the tone, imagine you are more formal in writing than speech!

Faustus

We don't like to get things wrong in the City of Bridges, and we don't like to fail to keep our word. However it seems that a bargain struck by a friend and colleague of mine Faure has not been kept.

A full year's work from one of our constructs you were promised, so that you could concentrate on achieving your ambitions of casting powerful battlefield magics, and it seems that only one season's service was delivered.

I shan't bore you with the details of what our constructs were called back to do in the City, or why Faure never returned to Anvil to discuss the bargain you struck.

I will however come to Anvil, bearing the coin your business should have earned from the creature I think you know as Trinket's work. If you can share tales with me of what you have achieved in battlefield ritual I will be glad to hand over the coin.

As a Herald of Prospero, I share the Subtle Spider's love of seeing people achieve, and so I also have some further propositions for you... We'd like to see someone who understands the importance of magical potency rise to power.

I will seek you out on the first evening of the Solstice, looking first in the Urizen camp. If you expect to be elsewhere, perhaps you would be good enough to leave word for me somewhere notable. The Sentinel's Repose seems like a convivial place I might easily find?

May you be rich in favours and friends

Zola

Herald of the Lord of the Loom