

Zoria (10516.1)

You dream that the night sky is dusted with stars. Their arrangement is unfamiliar. Rather than a random scattering from which patterns emerge the longer you look at them, these stars are laid out with geometric precision. The pattern is immediately obvious but its meaning is beyond you.

You are in a forest of thin white trees. They have no leaves – their thin branches twist and yearn toward the sky. Here and there between the trunks, you spot odd smooth columns of translucent crystal jutting from the dry, black earth. There doesn't seem to be any design to their locations. They are angular, smooth sided, and vary between half a dozen feet tall to looming three-storey towers. The trees cluster close around them.

A path runs between the trees. It is flat earth, bordered by tiny spheres of prismatic crystal. It is razor-sharp straight, bending neither to the right nor the left. You pick a direction, and head along it.

There are bats flying overhead, and hanging from the trees. You spot only a small handful at first, then increasing numbers. They bicker and flutter, zipping across the night sky on some urgent errand. One slaps against the side of a nearby column of clear stone, clinging with its clawed wings, and glares balefully at you from eyes the colour of the sun just before it drops below the horizon. It chitters, agitated, then launches itself into the air again.

Through the trees ahead you begin to hear the whispers of strings. A harp. Liquid, thrumming notes carried on the still wind. The music seems familiar but you cannot place it. You move faster.

You can hear water up ahead; a bubbling stream feeds into a small pond dotted with broad green water lilies on which sit little frogs – a still, attentive audience gazing adoringly at the source of the music.

The musician is seated on an old-fashioned backless wooden chair sits a man in archaic Dawnish dress. His raiment is deep blue and rose red. Limp flags bearing the heraldry of a sitting sphinx, head on one side, hang from banner poles to either side of the chair. The man is playing a harp with masterful skill, his fingers teasing a melody of profound beauty from the metal strings. He rests his hand against them when he spots you, smiling a welcome.

This is Morgan – he gives no other name – and he is a harpist. He speaks with an easy camaraderie, offering you a seat. You realise another backless chair has appeared from nowhere, just across from him.

He is easy to talk to, this Morgan, with the odd habit of punctuating his words with gentle brushes of his fingers against the harp strings. His voice never rises above polite conversation, and the more you talk to him the calmer, more relaxed, more detached you become.

He calls himself a witch, with a great deal of interest in the way both magic and music can make people feel things, can inspire greatness or drag someone down into dark thoughts and self-doubt. He listens to the skies, he says, trying to learn the music of the stars. But he also listened to the world, to learn the music of water and wind, the slow music of the

trees, the laughing music of the birds at dawn and dusk. He has a faint accent you cannot quite place, and when he speaks of music it becomes stronger.

He is not familiar with the Empire – he speaks of a falling out with the Queen of Dawn that cemented his intention to learn the music of dreams, so with the aid of an old friend he walked out of the world and into the dreamscape. There is a hint his departure might not have been quite so measured as he claims, but he moves the conversation away from topics of politics whenever they come up.

He's also fascinated by you, especially your thoughts about music. He listens as you find yourself describing your home, your life, Anvil, the Empire. His fingers twitch, and he begins to play as you speak, weaving your words with unearthly skill into the music he plays. Some of the frogs actually join in, punctuating his rippling melody with rhythmic pulses. Even the wind plays along, sighing the branches in a way that accentuates his theme. He smiles, happily, as he plays, and as you talk.

You awaken, feeling content and relaxed, and refreshed as rarely before, full of a quiet anticipation of the day to come.

Effect: Until the start of the next Profound Decisions Empire event you can perform the ritual Solace of Chimes (Day: 8) as if you had mastered them; if you have already mastered this ritual, you may perform them as if you have one additional rank of Day 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: You feel full of anticipation of the day to come, and the new things you'll encounter. You feel an urge to talk to people about their plans for the day, and the coming year.

In addition, as long as you are under the effect of this enchantment, you feel calm, relaxed and focused, but also feel an urge to seek out music of all kinds – instrumental music and singing – and you find the company of skilled musicians especially appealing.