

**Aleksandr Zoravich Novosad/ Micah Gerstner (12200.1 )**  
**Somnolent Wanderer**

You are in a great hall. One end of the hall is open to the night sky – great windowed doors smashed and shattered open. Through the door pours dark water, swirling around your thighs. You try to wade through the water, almost losing your balance, knowing that if you fall beneath the surface you will not rise again.

There are things floating in the water around you – bodies. People in strange clothing, in an unfamiliar style. Rich cloth, bright colours soaking into the dark waters. Incongruously, fruit floats among them as well, and all the scattered detritus of some great feast. The water is deepening around you, continuing to pour in. The bloated corpse of a man in strange orichalcum armour thrusts against you.

Behind you you hear a voice calling you “This way,” it says – it is not speaking Imperial but you understand it nonetheless.

Hung on the far wall of the hall is a great silver mirror, from which a lucent phospherence is pouring. It does not reflect the room – instead it shows white marble halls. A woman – beautiful and terrible, her hair piled up imperiously atop her head and wound with sungold, wearing a sheet dress of white material – is reaching out of the mirror toward you.

“Quickly,” she says – commanding. The water is nearly at your chest. You swim desperately towards the mirror, trying not to swallow any of this cold riverwater, fouled by death.

Her hand grasps yours, and with uncanny strength pulls you and then ... dislocation ... and you are sitting on a stone bench in a reception hall. The same woman, even more commanding than when she was merely a living reflection – pours a tall goblet of purple wine for you and hands it across. Your clothes are dry, but the cold lingers in your bones. The wine will warm you and drive away the lingering touch of the grave.

She refers to herself as The Queen. She knows she is dreaming, and that you are using magic to speak with her. She asks about the waking world, about who you are, and what you do, and why you are wandering the halls of the empty palace. She seems loathe to talk about herself, but you manage to glean a few details. She was a great queen, and it was she who caused the flood that filled the hall where your dream began. She has a great affection for a certain Eternal of Night that she sometimes calls the Black Wyrn; but also a broken heart for she has been sundered forever from the man she loved above all others. She is a potent sorceress, who chose this place rather than pass into death alone.

Her face hardens when she speaks of death, and of the Lord of the Ashen City who speaks with the voice of jackals. Of the rite of the Black Shawl, and of the price paid by all those who reach beyond the wall of death into the Dry Lands where the spirits of all those who have been lost are found.

She is considerably more lucid than almost any other magician you have met walking the paths of the Somnolent Wanderer. An engaging conversationalist, clever and insightful, as interested in who you are and why you are here as anything else. The night seems to pass all too quickly.

You feel a weight of your limbs, wakefulness calling you, and as everything begins to fade and fragment around you she grabs your hand and stares deep into your eyes and whispers “Be very careful ...” but if there is more she wishes to communicate, you awaken before she can do so, the taste of dark purple wine lingering on your lips.

**Effect:** All your personal mana has been depleted, rather than replenished by a night's sleep. You can recover personal mana as normal – via a potion or a Chamber of Secrets or similar - but it is as if you had spent all your mana in your sleep rather than resting fully.

Provided you have at least one rank of the appropriate lore, until the start of the next Profound Decisions Empire event you can perform the ritual Whispers Through the Black Gate (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 the appropriate lore, subject to the normal rules about additional ranks. You should keep this vision and show it to a referee if you perform this ritual.

**Roleplaying effect:** When you awaken, for at least the next hour, fragments of the dreaming marsh intrude into your perception; damp trees, deep mud, strange insects or lizards or amphibians. They are hallucinations, but anyone who shared this dream vision with you might experience the same elements (you're encourage to riff about this among yourself). They'll disappear as quickly as they come.

As long as the enchantment lasts you are experience a roleplaying effect: you want to make sure those you love know how you feel. You find spending time in their company refreshing, but there is a bittersweet awareness that eventually you will be parted – by circumstance or by death.