



Moon Song Performs

by Lady Wolf

Her dark skin glistened in the flickering flames of the candles, slicked with a sheen of sweat, as she sang the last song of the evening. Her harp was nestled perfectly on her lap, the strings flowing with the melody, the tune appropriately ominous for tonight's closing song. It was a myth of the Age of Disorder, as her tradition was always to conclude the night with these mysterious stories.

She sang of the seventh daughter of a seventh son, whose family had harvested the nearby trees for generations, slowly hacking away at a once mighty forest that had been planted by the ancients to keep angry Spirits away. When the daughter was in her sixteenth winter her father and his brothers harvested too greedily, arousing the anger of the very Spirits they thought to protect themselves from.

Furious, one such Spirit took the youngest daughter from the family, secreting her away to the very bowels of its beloved forest. Yet the Spirit found itself growing oddly fond of the child, for she was not as the Spirit knew most humans to be, and he kept her alive, bestowing on her a Gift. This gift was communication with the trees that she dwelt in the midst of, and with very earth itself.

Many years passed as the girl lived and matured in that very grove, but the innocent form of her ten-year-old self never changed a bit. Finally, through her gift, news came to her that all her family were dead but her brother whom she had loved, and he lay on his own deathbed. She went to her captor Spirit whom she had come to love, and begged for a few days release so that she might pay her respects to her last living relative, and the Spirit grudgingly agreed.

The girl traveled to the home that she not seen for six decades, and when her brother saw her, he wept with joy, for though she should have been a ghost he'd never believed she had died. She stayed there in the still half-built fortress, and cared for her brother in his last days. They talked of many things, but mostly of what had happened to her. She told him of being swept away by the Spirit, and of the Spirit's care for her, keeping her alive, and blessing her, and of her life over these many years. He told her their father, uncles, and mother had searched for her in the forest, never touching a tree in harm, and how they all fell to a mysterious death. And all her siblings had spent half their lives searching for her before giving

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up at last, though he never gave up until he no longer possessed the strength to look any longer. She wept for the family she had lost. And as her brother drew his last breath, telling her he loved her, she flew into a mad despair. She returned to her trees and the Spirit who had raised her, wondering what was left for her in the world, and, miserable, her body died in her beloved grove of trees.

The Spirit came across her small form and could not bear to part with her, and he released her soul. But she was caught between two worlds, and had neither a human form nor the shape of a Spirit, so her soul became bound to her forest, where, it is rumored, that she became a Spirit of those very trees.

As the last note died in the room, it was as though a spell was broken. Men and women now remembered once again to draw breath. Moon Song gathered up her instruments and left the stage. Her audience laughed at the notion of a human becoming a Spirit, but how odd it was that they so willingly believed it just a moment before! Moon Song just smiled, a small knowing smile to herself, as she sat at the bar and ordered a strong drink to cure her parched voice.

“Let me pay for that,” a masculine voice said beside her, followed by the clink of a heavy coin purse.

“You don’t want to do that, Lord.” She didn’t even turn her head to answer him. A blessing of this tavern was that social standards were left at the door, and not bowing or showing the proper respect of a noble house was not to be punished.

“No? Why wouldn’t I want to buy a lovely Lady with an entrancing voice a drink?”

“I’m no Lady, Lord. Just another commoner, that is why.”

The man barked a laugh, and imagined there was a jolly twinkle in his eye. “Why do you lie about your status?”

“Why do you doubt?” She replied calmly, “Because no commoner could have such a gift? Afford such extravagant instruments? Why would a person lie and call themselves a lowly commoner? Lord.” The title was added as though it was an afterthought. She picked up her drink and drank it quickly, as the nobleman looked on surprised. Then setting her own coin down in payment of the drink she rose from her seat. “Good evening, Lord.” She finished, then carefully swung the harp and latched it to her back, followed by the cloak. Smiling, she left the tavern.





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She drew the cloth of the cloak tight around her as the bitter winter cold struck against her. A smile still graced her face, as she laughed quietly. Caught up in herself and against the cold, she did not even hear the heavy footfalls behind her.



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