

FANTASY 2

I looked at the archway; that suspended intangible glow emanating from betwixt two crossing trees. I closed my eyes and took a deep breath, holding it in for as long as I could bear, before releasing it loudly. I held my eyes closed. It was just a trick, when I opened my eyes, it would be gone.

I snapped my eyes open, and the glow seemed to have sharpened; that strange iridescent glow, a swirling amalgamation of bright colours that danced upon one another like hot oils floating on a pot of warm water. The more I stared at it, the sharper the image became.

It's not there.

I repeated the phrase over and over again in my head, hoping to convince myself that the colours were simply a corruption of my imagination as my mother had always told me when I was a child.

Still, the longer I stared, the brighter the colours became and the sharper the swirling maelstrom of colours appeared. From the glowing between the two trees –which crossed at the top like a tent– I could hear a faint sound, like one thousand whispering voices, or the gentle rustling of the wind through the forest. Though the sounds were

intelligible, they beckoned me forward, imploring me to step into the iridescent light. The thought of crossing the boundary scared me; but still I felt compelled to make the journey. Some part of me craved to see the other side of the portal and what lay beyond it; something told me that it was where I belonged.

I shook my head violently.

None of this is real.

I reassured myself once more.

Before my birth, when my mother carried me, an elderly woman approached her, telling her that I would be born with afflictions which she could not comprehend. It is believed that when the soul of a person had recently left a physical body –or is about to– the soul, as it slips from the mortal realm, begins to fuse with the wider intelligence of the universe and the plane upon which departed souls operate. For this reason, the elderly –whom are soon to die– have a connection with the spirit world, and can see things which the average person cannot. It is also said that children –whose souls have been freshly imbued into a mortal body– possess these same gifts of perception.

The elderly lady approached my mother, filling her with worry about the state of her unborn child. At the elderly woman's insistence, she consumed numerous enchanted herbs, oils and salves in order to ensure

my vitality. Three moons later, I was born without any maladies or sicknesses.

However, I have always possessed something of a pragmatic, logical mind. It is my opinion that the elderly lady was simply succumbing to the effects of age, and as her body aged and began to fail her, so too did her mind. My mother -superstitious and full of maternal worry- took it upon herself to ingest the salves that were recommended to her, and praised the Gods when I was born without injury. However, I wonder if the salves and potions she consumed might have had a profound influence on my own mind itself.

As soon as I could speak, I talked about strange iridescent glows. Some were on people's skin, others soared across the sky, and some floated down the streams. My mother had assumed these were nothing more than a child's overactive imagination, but as I began to get older, I began to describe in intricate detail what I was seeing. This began to frighten her; she feared that I was feeble-minded or suffered from Lunar sickness.

Q: When the character opened his eyes, what seemed to have happened to the glow?

A: It seemed to have sharpened.

Q: What phrase did he keep repeating over and over in his head?

A: "It's not there."

Q: What is said about children?

A: That because their souls have been freshly imbued into a mortal body, they possess gifts of perception.