

# Song of the Ancient

## Paramaecium

The song I perceive as I wander through the woods through the dim light of dawn, lilted as it's carried on soft shifting winds through the stillness of this early morn. "Upon the hill, east of the woods, the old man stood rapt in thought; gazing, contemplative and lost in himself. His old hands, fingers long and thin, but rugged, grasped the wooden staff. It was familiar in his hand; crooked yet strong. How many times? How often had he before this stood on this very place, lost within himself; rapt in reflection? A light breeze swelled about him ruffling his hair and wisps of beard, grey with age and wisdom of years. He had seen much, experienced much and known friends in the Hidden Lands. But that was before; before the Fall. Glancing downward, a sea of activity, the forest teeming with life and lives. But lives are merely a doorway wherethrough can be expressed the nature of the Ancient; the one who abides within the Hidden Lands. The old man thinks 'I am become not what was intended but through intent am become.' And so, in servitude to human heart, he made forfeit that which was his; the intangible for the tangible, the imperishable for the mortal." By now I am intoxicated by the surreality of the tale, viewing myself in the old man, and at last it dawns and I realise the very nature of mankind, and of myself, and I lay down to cry. "In his youth, the Old man wielded the Garensword, but not now.

And yet, the legend holds that one day, Man shall wield the two-edged blade once more to the conquest of nations and strongholds and powers beyond this realm. "I raise my eyes as the song comes to an end and a stranger approaches as though she's a friend. Extending her hand I accept it and rise. Standing, she looks into my eyes. "De-nyl, we have a long way to go. There is so much, too much, that I have to show you." "If the truth is what you seek, it is only with the Ancient whose face is never seen. He remains within the Hidden Lands and may only be reached with the Garensword in hand. Let us depart from this place." I was relieved to learn that I would not be alone in my quest. For that day, Destiny became my guide. I released my falcon, the bird soaring high and free above the forest canopy. And yet there remained within my heart the lingering memory of that tragic Fall; the wretched nature of mankind and of myself. Am I who I think I am? Am I even alive?

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