

Summoning the Guardians of the Astral Gate

Bal-Sagoth

It is written in the ancient legends... that high amidst the moon-swathed peaks of the great Mountain of Shadows, hides the aeon-weary threshold of the Astral Gate... the portal from our world, to beyond...

It is said that one who holds the key and knows the empyreal incantation may stand within the ancient ring of stones atop the mountain when the stars are correctly aligned, and unlock the mystic gate, summoning its sidereal sentinels, thereby attaining ultimate enlightenment and wisdom unparalleled...

Part 1: THE INVOKING

(The Aspirant Reaches The Summit)

Keepers of the cosmic threshold, my ascent has been fraught with terror, deathsteeped, storm-hammered.

(These grim mountains are strewn with the bones of the ill-fortuned dead.)

O' Guardians of the Astral Gate, the spheres blaze at last in trine... I hold the Key!

(The trinity of stars shall touch the circle of stones once more...)

The incantation of Xuk'ul is known to me, the Orb of Summoning earned with bloodshed!

(The crystalline key to the Outer Realms and the arcane rite to empower it are at last mine, Seized at swordpoint from the citadel of the Black Templars. Enlightenment awaits!)

Many years ago, the mystic Orb of Summoning was seized by the mysterious Black Templars, a band of sombre, plunder seeking knights from the kingdoms to the east of the Great Sea. They wrested the sorcerous gem from the ancient shrine of Azaimedes, where it had lain hidden for countless centuries, its true power and purpose known only to the dour shamans who tended to the elder place of worship. It is said that the tapestry of slaughter woven that day was unparalleled in its ferocity, and that the marble walls of the ancient shrine were, and still remain, stained vivid crimson with the spilled blood of the Orb's keepers.

Ka-kur-ra, I summon thee,

Zul'tekh Azor Vol-thoth.

Mighty Xuk'ul arise,

Kur'oc Gul-Kor, come forth.

I hold aloft the pulsing orb, astral spheres, empower the mystic key.

Ring of elder stones entwined in prophecy, the Rite of Invocation enthralls thine power.

Replete from drinking deep of darkness, black shapes dancing 'twixt the stones,
Lucent beams lancing forth from the gleaming, cepheid stars, a creeping mist ensorcells
my tongue...

A great stillness binds the moon-cloaked mountaintop in glooming shackles...

(High above, the myriad stars gleam bright against the night sky, three more resplendently bedazzling than the others, their sidereal auras engulfing the stones...)

And the central stone of the ancient ebon ring begins to pulsate with a darksome energy...

A thunderous maelstrom ablaze with writhing celestially spawned power then rends the

stygian night...

(A vast shimmering aperture, a vortex of heliacal fire... the pathway to beyond beckons!)

The Astral Gate is open...

The Guardians have awakened...

XUK'UL: Impudent mortal! You dare summon us? If 'tis elucidation you seek, you shall have it!

Such searingly terrible stellar majesty... my sanity is lashed like a vessel on a storm-wracked sea. What price this invocation? Shall the singing stars claim my very mind? To countless worlds we travel, riding the endless black seas 'twixt the stars... the ebon oceans of infinity... flying through a thousand suns, then watching their light fade, as if it were but a flickering candleflame snuffed by the wind. As beings of pure energy we become one with the vastness, transcending the ethereal walls of time, spanning at once this celestial eternity, and yet existing as no more than a mote of dust within the vista of its endlessness... Journeying beyond...

The threshold looms, (the star-way between dimensions stretches before me...)

The Gate To That Which Lies Beyond yawns wide...

Unspeakable forces gibber and pulsate in the Outer Darkness... Elder horrors dwell here, things which were ancient and revelled in sublime galactic malevolence when even Xuk'ul was naught but a bloated cosmic maggot, writhing and suckling at the breast of its amorphous mother... They-Who-Lurk-And-Breed-In-Limbo... the squamous sovereigns of the elder void!

Primal terror drags my essence screaming back from the threshold.

The ichor of pestilent tongues clings to me, tendrils probing, the ire of fiends! The ravening black worms of madness are devouring the shredded remnants of sanity as I return to my slumbering steel-clad body... but as the dream-veil lifts, I feel my limbs transform, flesh becoming cold stone... enshrouded by a dark mantle of obsidian. And the laughter of the Guardians echoes, carries upon the winds of this spectral eve. Such is the price of enlightenment. And so, a new brooding sentinel of stone joins the others on the nighted mountain top...

Standing silently in the ancient circle of truth, standing... waiting,

Beneath the stars.

Lyrics: Byron

Music: Jonny Maudling

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