

Jarvis the Duck

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The Omen

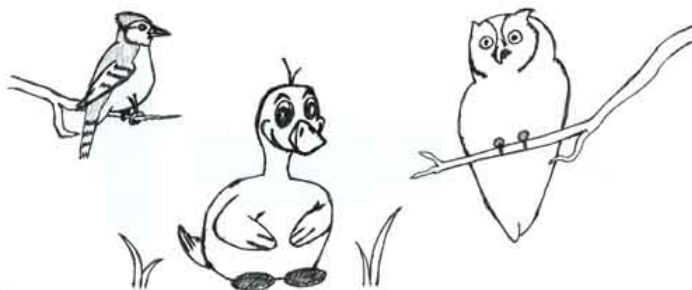
Jarvis is a young duck that lives on a small pond in The Great Poplar Forest. These are the chronicles of his adventures.

The party continued to fly due north. The Harpy patrols, however, had become increasingly numerous. Talon was at a loss to explain the Harpies' strong presence in this part of The Black Forest. He told the party that the Harpies' domain had always been to the west, with their capital at The Cliffs of Valhalla, and that the Falcon's domain lies to the east. He explained that the Harpies and the Falcons were natural enemies and that this land had always been a neutral zone. The friends discussed possible alternative routes but decided to continue due north to try to reach the Snowy Owls as quickly as possible. A detour to the east through the falcon territory near Heliopolis would be very time consuming. The party did decide to begin traveling at night. Sage, with his excellent night vision, was particularly helpful in guiding them. It was now late November, and the party had been traveling at night for several days. Dawn was beginning to break, and the group was just bedding down in the canopy near a large river after bowing to Ra.

"Dudes, I am so ready for sleep," said Jay.

"I didn't think you ever got tired, Jay," replied Jarvis good naturedly, "We'll have to write this date down."

"I can't get used to this night flying," said Jay.



"Man, night flying's a lot better than being dismembered by a Harpy patrol," said Sage with a smile, "I actually find it refreshing."

"Yeah, I guess I agree, Sage; I'm not really up for a dismemberment at the moment," replied Jay with his usual good natured sarcasm.

"OK, guys, less banter and more sleep," said Jarvis with a smile.

Suddenly, a huge object, traveling very quickly, fell from the sky and landed in the river with a loud splash. The friends looked up in the dim light to see the huge shadowed figures of two Harpies flying away to the north.

"I think that was a bird," said Jarvis excitedly. "We'd better have a look." He jumped from the canopy, glided down to the water, and then dove down. A second later he popped up, "Angel, give me a hand, there is a bird down here."

Angeldown was already gliding down. Together, they pulled a Harpy from the river, struggling to break through the ice that had formed all along its banks.

"Holy crap," said Jay, "This guy's a monster," and then again, "Holy crap!"

The bird was huge, even by Harpy standards, and its wings and feet were bound with strong twine. It was barely conscious, but as it coughed up water it was clear he would be OK. Talon kept his distance, warily eyeing the Harpy.

“I don’t know if we should have saved this one,” said Talon warily.

“We couldn’t let him drown,” replied Angeldown firmly.

Sage sliced through the twine with his sharp beak, and after a few moments, the Harpy became more lucid.

“Where ... am I,” managed the Harpy with a deep, raspy voice.

“I don’t know exactly where we are,” said Jarvis, “as we are travelers, but we just pulled you out of that river. ... I’m Jarvis.”

The Harpy looked around at the party, pausing his eye briefly on Talon. He was standing now, and towered above the friends. Yet, he seemed calm. “Jarvis the duck, I am Thor. You pay me great respect ... You saved my life.” He nodded to Jarvis and then to Angeldown. “My general, Red Claw, ... my ex-general, I assure you, ... they bound me in my sleep. ... They tried

to kill me!” said Thor, half to the party and half to himself.

“Why?” asked Jarvis innocently.

“You see, ... I am the king of the Harpies.”

Talon winced, shocked, yet remained composed. The others were at a loss of what to make of Thor. “I must return. My clan and I will make those responsible for this pay dearly. ... Yet I have been saved by ducks, ducks traveling with a falcon. I do not know what this means. Perhaps, I have been wrong. Perhaps, this is an omen.”

The friends were mainly frozen and replied with silence. Thor took off and flew north. As he left, he bellowed in a deep voice that had regained its strength, “There is a gorge just north of here. Stay away from there or you may be killed. You should leave this place. You are in great danger.”

After Thor had gone, the friends stood in silence. After a while, Talon said in a low voice, “I do not like the sound of any of that.”