

Jarvis the Duck

Kurt Venables

The Starry Night

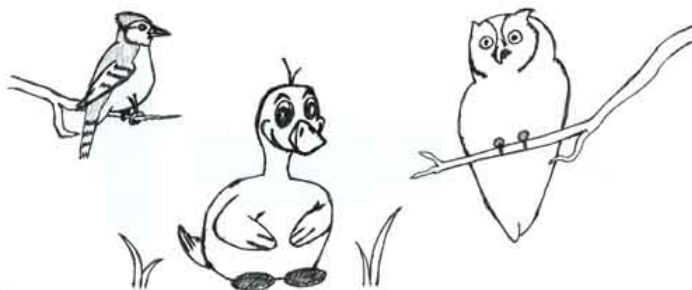
Jarvis is a young duck that lives on a small pond in The Great Poplar Forest. These are the chronicles of his adventures.

The party followed The White River north for two more weeks. The number of Harpy patrols they sighted had gradually dwindled as they moved north of the chasm, and they had not seen a patrol now for almost a week. Also, they were traveling by day and had no further incidents with Vampires. They sometimes heard distant screeches at night, but Talon explained that the Vampires homed in on movement and that they would be safe bedded down in the canopy.

It was now mid-December and had become bitterly cold. The river had frozen completely over, and the terrain had become mountainous. The land was contorted like a pile of broken egg shells; they seemed to be flying over an endless series of ridges. The forest, however, appeared distinctly lighter from the air, and perhaps less ominous, as thick snow covered a large part of the canopy. The spirits of the party had lifted because they were now approaching their destination: Temple Mountain. The party was bedding down in the canopy near the river bank after another day's flying.

"We should reach Temple Mountain tomorrow," said Talon enthusiastically.

"I'm a little nervous," replied Angeldown, "Will we really meet Gnosis?"



"Yes, and though he is very wise, I remember him as very down to earth," reassured Talon.

"We'll do fine, Angel," replied Jarvis with a smile, as his eyes met hers. She quickly returned a pretty smile.

"So you know Gnosis, man," said Sage to Talon.

"I wouldn't go that far," replied Talon, "but my parents, being the high priest and priestess of Heliopolis, would often visit him at Temple Mountain. Though, as I was a young bird, I really spent most of my time there with the young owls. I do remember him as being a very kind, old bird. He was old even when I was young, and I remember him as very, very wise."

"I'm excited to meet him, dudes," exclaimed Jay. "Looks like we may have a clear day for flying tomorrow," he added pointing up to the sky. It was as crisp and clear as a bell. The stars seemed to jump out at them.

“My mother used to tell me that a star is a beautiful soul,” said Talon looking up, lost in thought, “a soul that knew the answer to the riddle of Osiris, when asked in the underworld. She would tell me that the brightest stars were the greatest priests, priestesses, queens, and kings of long ago. She would even tell me their names. Birds nowadays don’t believe in the stars, or Osiris, or Ra. All they think about is themselves and their luxuries, their Goldenreed, their thistle down.” Talon’s voice trailed away.

“When we meet Gnosis and talk about this riddle, I hope our souls can shine like the stars,” replied Jarvis quietly.

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