

## Rachel Alejandro

# "In The Raven-Haunted Forests Of Darkenhold, Where Shadows Reign And The Hues Of Sunlight Never Dance"

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The Words of the Forest-King on the Eve of the Nexus:  
I am the immortal King of the Deep Woods,  
Servitor of the Old Gods of the Forest...  
I hear the whispered words of the trees...  
Such ancient secrets they sing...

Swaying serpents ring my oak-hewn throne,  
Night and shadow are my hunting dogs...  
Ravenous, they howl to be unshackled,  
That their maws may be glutted with the blood of my  
foes.

Raven's claw... tooth of the wolf

Ancient trees my brooding sentinels,  
Gnarled branches clawing the nighted heavens.  
Spirits who dwell in shadow, unfurl thy darkling wings...  
Awaken, o' elder creatures of this sylvan realm,  
Stalk once more this ebon-cloaked eve.

I hear the whispered words of the trees,  
Such ancient secrets they sing...

I stand now at the anvil,  
Adamantine hammer in my hand,  
In thunder-song the steel I smite,  
A clarion heard throughout this land.

(Yawning wide beneath me...) the jaws of the worm...  
(hearken, the spell is woven...) the call of the worm...  
Raven's claw... tooth of the wolf

Ablaze upon the Altar of Stone,  
The Sigil of An-rayuth, the summoning!  
Folk of the Mist, Dwellers in Shadow,  
The thrice-blessed wand of the Wood-Gods is  
beckoning!  
At the aeon-swathed Shrine of the Oak I kneel,

O' Oracle of the Great Forest, hear me this night...

[The Sylvan Oracle Speaks:]

The gods of the earth and sky are watching, the circle  
is nigh on  
Complete... the nexus is at hand. But hearken... for a  
new enemy approaches  
From the east... an enemy who hide their poisoned  
blades behind words of  
Falsehood sweetened with the ichors of carrion, to bind  
men's minds with  
Fetters of deceit. Speak now, o' Liege of the Deep  
Woods, Master of  
Darkenhold, and the enemy shall hear you...

[The Forest-King:]

Yes... I behold now the face of the encroaching foe...  
Hear my oath! You,  
Clad in gleaming robes of sparkling saffron, engorged  
with the mindless  
Adoration of countless thralls who bend the knee in  
flaccid obeisance...  
'neath thine vestments hides the rank stench of  
leprous corruption! Bring not  
Thine cursed icons into my ancient realm... your words  
of untruth shall not be  
Heard here! My steel is honed and thirsting for your  
life-ichors... aye, and  
With my dying breath I'll spit defiance in your face!

Upon my great throne hewn of ancient oak I brood...  
My mantle, the leaves stirred by the whispering of the  
winds.  
The elder gods of the Deep Woods gaze grimly down  
upon me...  
My blood courses through the trees and the earth...  
And I watch in silence, ebon-eyed and raven-winged.  
From every bough of my kingdom...

[The Lament of the Trees:]

Can you not remember? Have you forgotten the magic?  
Sing to us your spells once more, and the ancient  
forest shall dance to your  
Words...

[The Forest-King:]

I stand now at the anvil,  
Adamantine hammer in my hand,  
In thunder-song the steel I smite,  
A clarion heard throughout this land.

Can you not see the coils of the worm all about you?  
Can you not hear the writhing of the worm beneath  
you?  
Can you not scent the breath of the worm riding the  
wind?  
Can you not touch the skin of the worm in all that  
surrounds you?  
Can you not taste the ichors of the worm upon your  
tongue?  
Do dreams of the worm not haunt your slumber?

[The Forest-King:]  
I hear the whispered words of the trees,  
Such ancient secrets they sing...

[Lyrics: Byron]  
[Music: Jonny and Chris Maudling]

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