

Melodic and jovial, the river sang, a great unintelligible babble bubbled up and greeted the small town of Dvar. Naturally, this could only mean that the sorceress was bound to visit. More importantly, this could only mean that she was expecting her usual sacrifice.

A few days later, she arrived just at the night's arrival. The people of Dvar had already gathered their sacrifice to her: an assembly of flawed jewels scrambled about in a deep mass of dirt.

From inside her meager home, Ira, a young, quiet girl aged thirteen, watched with stirred curiosity. According to her parents, the sorceress had not visited Dvar in over a generation, so she decided to pay exclusive attention to her for as long as she could.

Ira first noticed the alien look of the sorceress, a long, flowing amber robe, tattered in archaic symbols, covering pale, glassy skin.

The sorceress bent down to plunge her hands deep into the soil, quickly grabbing the gems from the pit before throwing them in a pile. This process continued for about an hour, the sorceress working mindlessly in her excavation. Once she was satisfied, the sorceress sat and took a few of the gems in her hands.

The sorcerer has a bountiful harvest, multiple differently shaped gems practically glowing in the dim night. Ira was entranced by both the jewels and the one holding them. Unfortunately, it was getting darker, and she could scarcely see the sorceress clearly.

Ira stepped down from the windowsill and exited her home, walking a few paces closer to the scene. Ira crawled into a bush and continued watching.

Now, the sorceress had dropped all the jewels, looking at them lazily. After a few moments of silence, the sorceress spoke a few small, muddled words. Then, she began violently scratching the earth below her. After a few moments, she pulled back, her arm now shaped and sharpened like a spear.

Ira watched on in silent awe, not moving a bit.

The sorceress moved and struck a jewel, then again, and again. She continued until the jewel was rigid, sharp, and undoubtedly luminous. The sorceress examined the newly shaped jewel before quickly jamming it into her leg. Using her forearm, she hammered the gem deep into her skin, notably, still pale but not as glittering as the rest of her skin, until it could no longer be seen.

The sorceress did this to every jewel she found, until eventually, all of them were lodged deep into her legs.

The sorceress trailed her normal hand down her freshly impaled legs, a satisfied look on her face. As she stood, she began to walk away from the town. Ira waited a moment before following.

Ira followed her, trailing closely behind. After a few moments, the sorceress stopped and turned, looking blankly at Ira.

Ira gasped, looking up at the sorceress.

“I look great, don’t I, girl?”

Ira stood wordlessly.

“It’s okay to stay quiet, I know; you’re entranced, right? As you should be.”

Ira’s silence continued.

“I felt you watching me,” she said, smiling lightly. She walked closer to Ira and bent down to meet her eyes. “You’re pretty, for a village girl, ugly compared to me, though,” she said, warmly. “But you like them too, right?”

The sorceress pulled out one of the shaped jewels from her body before bringing it up and presenting it to Ira in her palm. “Aren’t they magnificent?” the sorceress said in wonder.

Ira nodded silently.

The sorceress smiled wickedly, revealing a set of dazzling teeth, lighting up her dark mouth. “Take one,” the sorceress said. “It’ll grow and make you so, so much more,” she continued, her hands shaking with growing excitement.

Ira stared at the pointed jewel, shining and sharp. The sorceress quickly clawed open her mouth, yanked out her tongue, and easily shoved the jewel straight through Ira’s tongue.

Ira panicked for a moment, then quickly fell unconscious.

The next morning, Ira awoke, the sorceress nowhere to be found. She looked around for a moment before getting up and walking back to Dvar. When she came back, nobody seemed to notice that she left the night prior.

Ira walked up to the first person she saw and tried to speak; however, the ability seemed to have escaped her. She couldn't even open her mouth.

After trying for a scant few moments, she quickly ran to the river. She knelt down and saw her face in the waters. She pried open her lips and saw a dazzling dome of crystal filling up her entire mouth.

Ira fell backwards in horror, landing in the shallow water.

The river sang no song today; calm and peaceful waters greeted the small town of Dvar.