

Entrances to Faerie: The Warlock's Journal

March 2015 - Contest #18



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Introduction

Welcome to *The Warlock's Journal* Contest!

The Warlock's Journal is a roving contest, at a different blog or website each month. The host picks the topic and then solicits entries from the RPG community at large. When all the entries are in, they are shared with the community and a fan vote is taken for the most popular entry. In March 2015, the contest was hosted by Tabletop Adventures.

In honor of Spring, and thoughts of leprechauns, this month's topic is "Entrances to Faerie." The challenge given was to describe an entrance to the realm of the fey, in less than 500 words. The entrances described range from a non-descript door to other, more exotic, things. Writers were allowed to submit more than one piece, and a few people chose to do so. The public was invited to vote on the entries (which were presented anonymously) and select the favorite.

The winner of the Warlock's Journal Contest #18 was John M. Tipton for his entry, "Faerie Path." Congratulations, John, on having the favorite selection!

This is the final version of "Entrances to Faerie," which gives the name of the author of each piece as well as acknowledging the winner. Visit the [Tabletop Adventures website](#) for the entire list of Warlock's Journal Contests.

We hope you enjoy each entry, and wish you good gaming.

The good people of Tabletop Adventures,

And the Overlord.

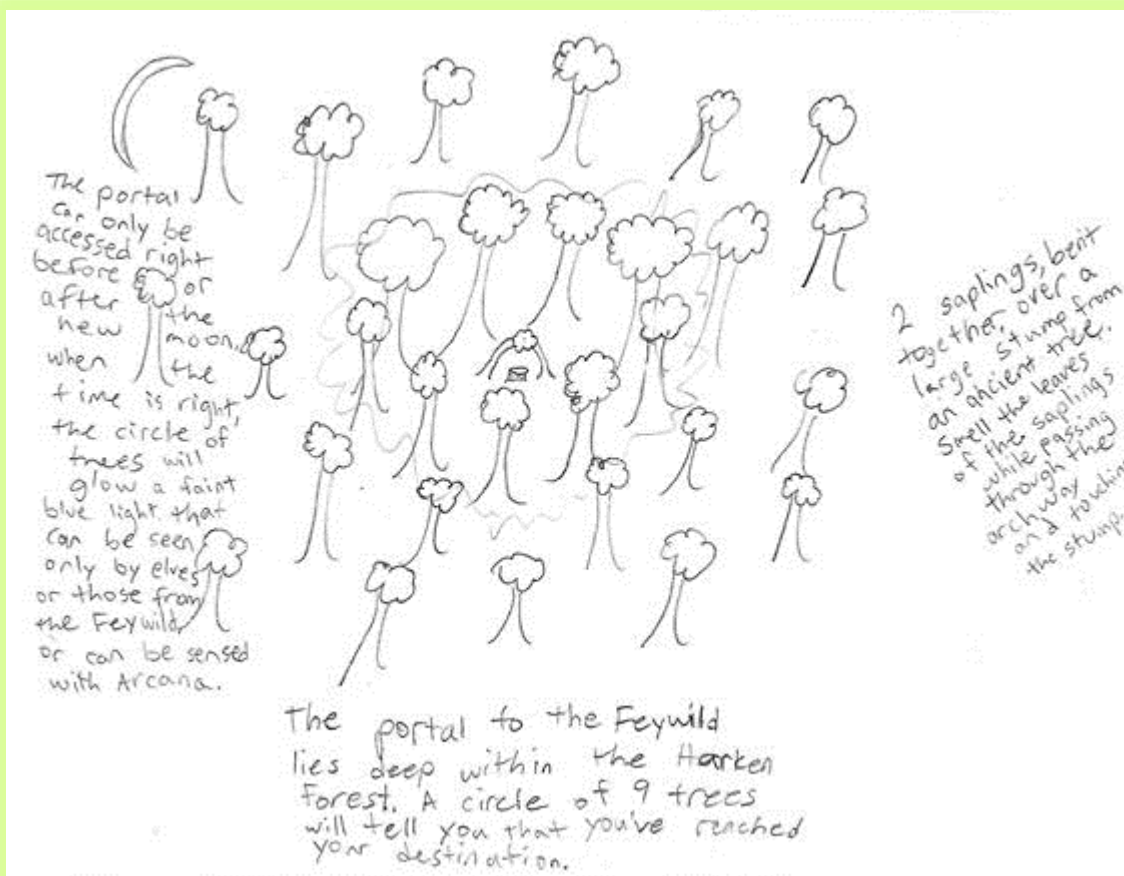
1 Ariel's Arch

Author: Frank Uy

This portal to Faerie lies deep within the forest. A circle of 9 trees will tell you that you've reached your destination. 2 saplings, bent together over a large stump from an ancient tree. Smell the leaves of the saplings while passing through the archway and touching the stump.

The portal can only be accessed during a thin crescent moon (dawn before a new moon, or dusk after it). When the time is right, the circle of trees will glow a faint blue light that can only be seen by those of fey blood, or skilled in the fey arts.

(This entrance was created by my daughter (then age 10) in 2010 for her 4E eladrin. Modifications were made to her original text to make it system agnostic. Here is Ariel's original illustration of her arch.)



2 Changeling Soup Pot

Author: Frank 'Dragonsdoom' V.

When changelings successfully abduct a child, they need to make special arrangements to return to the fairy realm with a human child in tow. A specially seasoned soup of buckwheat, mushrooms, and hair from the child is prepared and heated to boiling point. Once the soup is frothing violently, the changelings jump into the pot with the child and vanish to the Faerie land.

Journeying to Faerie in this manner bestows an unnaturally long life for the child, as well as the curse of iron shared by all natives of Faerie. Should a hero leap into the pot to follow the changelings, the hero will arrive in Faerie covered in buckwheat soup, but otherwise unscathed. If the hero shares the same hair color as the child, the hero gains the curse of iron until returning to the mortal realm.

If someone should taste the soup, it will always be scalding hot and distasteful. Upon sleeping, creatures from Faerie may arrive to steal the dreams of the taster and sell them to elves, who have no dreams of their own.

A changeling soup pot only exists in the mortal realm; changelings have other, more nefarious ways to leave Faerie once they desire to return to the mortal realm.

Witches prize cold changeling soup.

Author: John M. Tipton

Legends tell of Faerie Path, a gateway from the mundane world. Clues from a bard lead to a small woods far from civilization, where the party must decipher a poem:

*"Mushroom Orange ye find,
Behind the Oak, their world blind,
Touch the Knot, unravel the bind,
Into the Abyss, leave all behind."*

They locate the mushroom by entering the woods, giving up the search, and leaving, when they find a plate-sized orange mushroom growing in the shadows. It's tilt points to a gnarled lightning-blasted oak, half-dead branches clawing the sky, with an old knot the size of a spread hand on the back side.

Touching the knot causes the bark to split open, air sucking wildly into the hole. The toucher has their clothes whipped about them, blinded by grit, but are safe. Others may be pulled roughly into the hole, taking damage, and vanish.

When the dust settles, along with leaves and birds, filtered light reveals a dark passage into the ground, the roots creating uneven steps. The hole issues a breeze smelling of loam and sap. Five steps down it becomes blackness.

Once free and walking into the hole, they feel the closeness of the tree and the ground, and it is comforting. At the edge, where only darkness exists, they feel fear and must overcome it in order to take the final step.

The darkness envelops like molasses, but does not hinder movement, nor is it sticky. Two steps on they stand on solid ground in darkness, but with colorful stars and the aroma of honeysuckle and roses.

An unfamiliar sun rises while unconscious party members, gear strewn on bright green grass, wake. Behind them stands a golden oak, the twin of the other.

All their possessions appear repaired but faded of color. Diseases and half their wound damage are healed. They feel younger. Anyone checking carefully realizes their clothes are not repaired, it is a glamor making them look better, and the land of Faerie's colors are so vibrant, everything pales in comparison.

After time to explore this friendly wood the youngest members feel restless, while the eldest may feel comfortable.

A palm-tall, sexless faerie with colorful wings arrives. "Welcome home." It says and holds out a tiny hand.

It may explain the following:

For those ready to quit adventuring, taking the faerie's hand retires them permanently. They will remain and be content playing music, games, and a myriad of other sedate but entertaining activities with many other people and fey creatures. They live this way at half their age for a hundred years, before simply vanishing.

Others not yet ready may return when they are prepared to quit the harsh world.

"Remember the poem." The faerie tells them.

Returning to their world is easy but they cannot return to the land of Faerie until ready. The world seems bleaker for a short span of days before they feel normal, ready to adventure again.

4 Fairy Ring

Author: Terry Bryner

A few delicate alabaster mushrooms grew at the edge of a clearing in the woods. Closer inspection in the pale moonlight revealed they seemed to surround the bare spot. To the young at heart and playful, the faint sound of music, strangely beautiful and compelling, draws them into the circle, seeming to vanish from the sight of others, who heard nothing. Inside the circle, the fey folk dance with joy and abandon, and the fortunate soul drawn in joins them willingly or not. The dance pace is frantic, and there is no rest before dawn. Not all humans can survive until the dawn, when at the first ray of sunshine the ring becomes simply a few mushrooms around a clearing in the woods. The fairies decide if an exhausted man or woman is simply left on the dewy grass, or has earned the right to join them for a day, or longer. Those invited in are feted as guests, possibly allowed to remain and dance, or permitted to leave the following night (which may be weeks or years later in the mundane world.)



Fairy Ring – Glyk Toma - [Creative Commons](#)

5 Farthing-Penny

Author: Margaret Ernsberger

The entrance to Farthing-Penny is a deserted train station, with rusty tracks, clocks that keep time together--but not with the rest of the city, and no one is ever seen to wind them. Next to the station door is a penny-farthing bicycle with the wheels reversed, the small one in front of the larger one.

Going into the ticket office, which is deserted, you see broken wooden benches lying in pieces on a worn out wooden floor. You approach a nondescript door marked "Lost Luggage." Once opened, if you are human and not wearing goggles, you will see nothing but a room with shelves of abandoned luggage and assorted left-behind personal items, none worth taking out. With goggles you will see the world of Faerie, where trains travel on tracks at impossible speeds, heights and angles through the sky. Some fairies ride colorful balloons, sitting on a swing-type seat attached below. Here, no two clocks show the same time; many have more hours, minutes and seconds than human clocks.

Fairy wings are made of a variety of metals. Some are precious metals, others are such as iron or lead but appear to weigh nothing to the fairies. Clothing is made from natural materials styled in quasi-human fashions: the females have a liking for corsets, short crinolines and stockings, all made of dark flowers, especially liking the color purple, while the men wear 3/4 length trousers and shirts of dark mushrooms and fungi, with multicolored waistcoats. They have a fascination for pocket watches, often having several pockets, one for each watch. No human has ever determined what times the watches are set for or what the times refer to.

Derbies, bowlers and top hats abound for the men, although what keeps them on their heads while in the air isn't apparent. Ladies wear mostly flat-sort of straw hats piled up with dark colored flowers, sometimes decorated with unusual mushrooms.

Weapons are often carried--bows and arrows and guns, and if the ammunition hits you, you will find yourself in a large banquet hall floating in the air, with a floor, four walls but no ceiling except for occasional clouds. Clockwork fairies flutter around the mahogany table, serving a sumptuous feast of fruits, vegetables, breads, sweetmeats, and an assortment of delicious beverages.

After the banquet the visitor finds himself incredibly sleepy, and soon awakens in the deserted train station, only the goggles don't work a second time.



Corfe Castle Station: Lies thru a Lens – Creative Commons

6 Ghost Space: The Fae's Demesne

Author: Andrew and Heleen Durston

Along the further spiral arm of the galaxy, there is a nebula whose gas clouds are thick with dark matter and suffused with dark energy. Space is so twisted that navigation is nearly impossible and warp drives frequently fail. But stranger still are the unexplained disappearances and attacks by unknown assailants. The few survivors tell tall tales of dark shadows in the nebula. Ships of unknown configurations, puissant weaponry and capable of impossible maneuvers and speeds. These dark vessels are crewed by sentients known only by the ancient Terran name, the Fae.

Most starships give the region a wide berth. The authorities have declared the area a navigational hazard. The superstitious have nicknamed it Ghost Space. Little do these space-faring races know that for the unseen unknown inhabitants of the nebula, dark energy is magick and dark matter is the raw material of artifact and enchantment. The walls of the nebula, thick gas bound by lattices of dark energy in the form of wards, alarms and detections, hide the Demesne within.

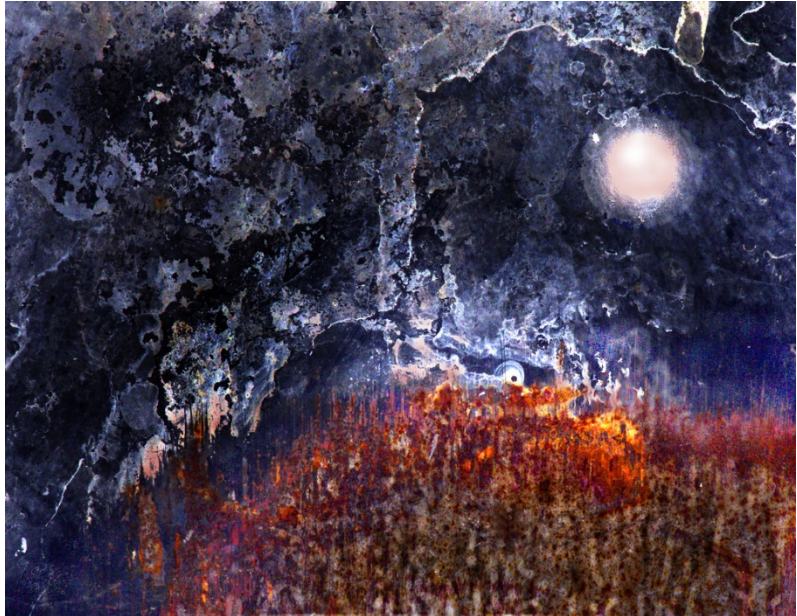
On the far side of these dark gas walls, in this specific place and time, is a small cluster of bright suns. In and about these stars is woven a vast tubular ribbon, thousands of miles across, of sunlit gas, appearing blue and dotted with clouds. Within this ring-like structure, bound by gravity and dark energy, floats thousands perhaps millions of asteroid sized structures. These floating vessels, if one can call them such, take many forms. Some, wild and feral, are covered in foliage of all shapes and sizes. Few are huge self-aware creatures. Others, crafted by sentient hands, take the form of spherical cities or vast castles. All are home to the Fae, vaguely humanoid entities born of our universe but shaped by dark energy.

Tall and thin, some with wings and others without, the Fae fly, sail or pilot through their realm. Those with great power to shape the dark energy, clad in armor of dark matter, move beyond the Demesne, exploring the nebula or transiting to other realms or planes. Our universe is filled with dark energy, thick in some places and thin in others. Where thick, the Fae have found other similar realms, which they reach by intricate weaves. Similarly notable pieces of dark matter, usually relics of times past or places of unusual nature, can be felt by the Fae across space and time. Some have seen their shadows as they slide from our realm back to theirs.

7 Metal Arches

Author: Dean Keith

In a large park, among the rolling hills, several hollow, metal arches are set into the ground in a long row. They appear to be public art, or perhaps part of a forgotten factory. When someone strikes the first one, a ringing sound that lasts for several seconds can be heard. If the arches are all passed through quickly enough, and the center arch is also struck at the appropriate time to amplify the ringing, a shimmering doorway will appear at the last arch. Passing through this arch will transport the person to the land of faerie.



Winter Forest Fire – Logan Fulcher - [Creative Commons](#)

8 Moonbeam

Author: Terry Bryner

On the crest of the hill, deep in the woods, a large rock stood. One side angled up to the top, and the rough stone seemed smoother there, perhaps as if trodden by many, many feet. Standing at the foot of the rock, she saw the Mountain of the Moon beyond, backlit by the faint glow of the moon rising behind it. Something made her want to climb the worn grey rock, to stand at the top as the moon finally rose over its mountain. And when it did, the first silvery moonbeam stretched from the summit right down to her feet, ephemeral yet somehow almost solid. And something, no, Someone, beckoned in a voice without sound, her to take that first step, into the world of Faerie. She stepped, and the moonbeam held her up. Walking hesitantly, she was still drawn across the distance in minutes. Tall pearlescent towers loomed on each side of her path, beautiful and forbidding at once. Expressionless guards lined the walls, but the seemingly obdurate gate stood open. The tall, stern fairy standing inside was clearly royal, yet was there alone, without companion or retinue. He was waiting for her.

9 Moonbow

Author: Terry Bryner

The trip through the mountains had been hard. The trees were thick and without track, and a heavy rain had fallen all afternoon. Wanting a cave, or at least a clearing wide enough to lie down, he pushed on, even as the sun dropped lower. The moon would be full tonight, its light nearly as good as full sun in these woods. Then he topped a ridge and stopped, transfixed. A delicate beautiful rainbow stretched in front of him, the bright moon and the damp air combining to create that rarest of sights, a moonbow. Unlike its daylight cousin, it seemed to reach all the way to the ground, just a little further along the ridge. He knew it couldn't, but...he had nowhere to go tonight, and he started toward it.

Moving in and out of dense growths of trees, he lost sight of the moonbow, but it always waited when he forced his way through, and actually seemed to be nearer each time. Almost running, he burst into a clearing, where the moonbow did reach the ground. And sitting on a log next to it was a fairy, so lovely he just stared for minutes. She stared back, her expression unreadable, and then arose and started toward the moonbow. Uncertain what to do, his mind was made up for him when she gestured him to follow, as she stepped lightly up the bands of light. In a trance, he followed, barely noticing where he put his feet, his eyes on her. At the top of the moonbow, she moved ahead, sinking down out of sight. When he came over the top, she had vanished. He staggered on, but the moon was now setting, and the bridge beneath his feet was fading. And then it was gone. He landed heavily in a forest. On rising, he shivered as he realized this was not the same forest he had been in. It was darker. It smelled like rotting flowers. And there was the sound of something moving nearby, stealthy and powerful.



Moonbow: Thoth God of Knowledge – Creative Commons

10 Sylphyde

Author: Margaret Ernsberger

The entrance to Sylphyde, the land of Faerie, is gained by passing through an unassuming waterfall, tall, but nothing to make it attract attention. Passing through the rock wall behind it involves nothing more than believing it is more than just rock. A person can then just pass through. Once that is done, the person finds themselves in a luminous hall of alabaster marble with high vaulted ceilings, and balconies only accessible by those who can fly. The floor of the hall is a pattern of silver and gold. The hall leads to the actual world of Faerie. A tremendous open archway at the far end, covered all around with every kind of precious stone.

In the middle of the hall is a fountain that sends up jets of water that sing bird-like sounds with each spray. Through the archway is the world of Faerie itself. There is an outdoor garden where stunning trees and flowers abound, blooming in colors seen nowhere in the human world, and which give off perfumes of all kind. In the sky are multicolored clouds where fairies lounge around on them as couches that sail through the sky like ships.

The fairies themselves have wings of all types, such as butterfly, bird and even made of spider webs. They are all beautiful and friendly but can tease non-fairy visitors. If you can laugh off the teasing they will invite you to an enormous feast in the center of a glade, after which there will come a downpour of rain, after which you find yourself back at the waterfall, unable to pass through the rock wall again.

11 The Alley Door

Author: Dean Keith

In a dark, seedy alley a nondescript wooden door hangs attached to a brick wall. Most people pay it no mind, seemingly ignorant of its existence. Anyone able, or willing, to see it and attempting to remove, or damage, the door will find themselves suddenly deciding to be elsewhere, with no memory of the door. Opening the door reveals nothing but the brick wall it is attached to. However, if the appropriate places on the door's frame are touched before opening it, a dark tunnel can be found behind the door. Following the tunnel will lead the person to the land of faerie.



Basement Door: Randy McRoberts – Creative Commons

12 The Ancient Mound

Author: Terry Bryner

The mound in the woods was unremarkable, supporting a dense growth of hawthorn and foxglove in the warm darkness. As the moon rose, a single silvery beam found its way through the surrounding trees to light a lovely lacy web, with seven strands radiating from the center, forming the heptagonal fairy star. In a few minutes the moon would rise higher and the star would fade back into darkness, but if a person could approach while it gleamed, aiming a birch wand, the side of the mound would seem to dissolve, opening a gateway for that person and a small party with linked hands to enter the land of Faerie. A short, dry tunnel opens into an ethereal world, beautiful buildings linked with living plants in total harmony. The intruders are met courteously by fairies, but their purpose there determines if they are welcome for long, or only briefly, or firmly, even forcibly, sent back.



The Fairy Glen: Pelle Sten – Creative Commons

13 The Bronze Herald

Author: Brion Frantz

"It doesn't work for most people, it's okay." She said blandly, "It happens." but I was stung.

"You said the key came to me personally. 'The Bronze Herald' you called it. Chose me, right? So, like it or not, I'm doing this."

My voice cracked a little as I said it. I was nervous, I'll admit it. I wanted this very badly, and now that my doubts had taken their turn it was time for the other side to rally. Wasn't I here, in "Oriana's", a completely new, unusual antique shop which "magically" appeared this morning? (Yes, the newspaper ads started last week, but it's not the seventeenth century. I mean, even the hill folk have to make a living.) And... and she was here, and there was no way this young lady was human, not even just "very artsy". Her sea-green eyes made my own smart with tears suddenly when they met them. I was all over shy and heart-warmed in a moment. The sound of tin whistle and fiddle music came from somewhere far away. The nearer I was to her, the stronger the scent of lilacs...

...No, no, if she wasn't fay, I would eat the very ugly hat I had to wear to get into the joint.

"Are you playing fiddle music, in the back of the shop or somewhere?"

"You have to see the door... No, know it." She held my eyes as she came out from behind the ornate metal cash register. "You have to know it's there. Feel it, smell the wood."

She took my hand, still holding the key. She pivoted to the outside of my arm, and I let her extend my reach out, straightening my arm in her tender grasp.

"Close your eyes, Son of Adam."

Surrendering to her gaze and touch, I did so. Any human, seeking that I sought, would have.

"Don't try so hard." She said, her accent was... Irish? Bulgarian? "You must feel it. Just feel the door wanting to come to the key. The key just... just announces that the door is present."

I held the clunky thing out, my eyes firmly shut. It was cold in my hands. But there was something, a resistance. Something struck imperceptibly against the side of the complex bronze form, and the thing resonated like a tuning fork.

From far away I heard the girl, she was talking, but I was too far away to make it out, echoes were garbling her voice. I could hear only one word.

"Now! Now..."

There was a “clack” as the flanges hit tumblers. A latch opened with a roll and a second “clack”. I turned it back and it stopped solidly. I reached out, following some instinct, some conditioning, to where the doorknob should be. There was a handle, with a latch under my thumb. I pushed down, pulling back on the handle. I opened my eyes.

It was near sunset here. The fiddle music was much louder.



The Bronze Herald: Steve Depelo – Creative Commons

14 The Eldest

Author: Terry Bryner

The Eldest was the title given to a huge oak tree, older than anyone remembered. It stood tall, but its trunk was gnarled and twisted. The bark folded inward on the North side, forming a deep cleft, taller than a man but barely wide enough to pass through sideways. Whispers said the Eldest's cleft led to a hollow, but probing in the half-light of day showed it only went in an arm's length. But on this late afternoon, a dragonfly, emerald green with jeweled eyes, flitted around and into the cleft, the setting sun making its golden wings glow. As the sun sank below the horizon, its last beams gone, the dragonfly flew into the cleft, its wings still gleaming. An unearthly tune, sweet but sad, could almost be heard...for the door to Faerie was open. The cleft now passes entirely through the Eldest, into a similar appearing forest populated by fairies. Most of the fair folk have no interest in the intruders, who should take care to note this side of the Eldest before going far, and take care to harm nothing alive. They may only receive a lukewarm welcome, and are unlikely to get any assistance beyond directions to the nearest town. Directions here are different; greater care is needed to find the Eldest again...although many clefts beckoned. The most likely outcome is that the party, hungry and tired, will eventually choose to return to the normal world...but probably be forced to use the nearest oak portal, which may strand them weeks or years later in a distant forest



The Faerie Tree: Phoenix Wolf-Ray – Creative Commons

15 The Magpie's Door

Author: Phil Nicholls

Description: This portal to Faerie is literally a hole in the air which drifts through the Greenwood. It resembles a window far more than a door, as the dappled woods of Faerie can be clearly seen through the open side of the Door.

The size, shape and location of the Magpie's Door changes, seemingly at random. Most observers recall the door being roughly circular. The Door can range in size from no larger than a mouse, to the height of a man, or more. Typically it is large enough for the characteristic magpies to fly through.

The Magpie's Door drifts through the deep Greenwood, sometimes scooping up leaves from the ground, sometimes chasing birds through the canopy. The behaviour of the portal is as unpredictable as any other Faerie enchantment.

How to Use it: The first challenge posed by the Magpie's Door is locating it, as it can only be seen from the front. When observed from the side, the Door appears as nothing more than a slice of mirror floating in the air. Only from the front quadrant can shining Faerie, and thus the Door, be seen.

The key to the Magpie's Door is to simply carry something shiny. Whenever they find it, charcoal burners in the Greenwood flick special shiny pebbles through the Door for good luck.

The greatest challenge to passing through the Magpie's Door into Faerie is the issue of climbing through a flying portal. Assuming the traveller is large enough to squeeze through the current size of the portal, the best way to enter is by flying through.

You may be lucky and catch the portal on, or near, the ground. Dotted through the Greenwood are several rickety wooden towers, built by travellers planning to jump through the portal as it drifted past. Other hopefuls sit waiting on low branches, or simply rely upon their acrobatic skills to launch themselves through the wandering door.

Beyond the Portal: On the other side of The Magpie's Door lies the sylvan wonder of Faerie. The appearance of the woods beyond varies with the season.

Pass through the Door in spring, and the glades of Faerie are strewn with bright flowers and the air filled with drifting blossom. In summer Faerie is infused with bright emerald light, and droning insects dance in the dappled shade. By autumn, the woods of Faerie are a rich gold tapestry, laden with nuts. Come winter, Faerie is blanketed in thick, feathery snow.

Whatever the season, mischievous sprites can be found in Faerie. These creatures may help, or hinder the traveller. Often the most dangerous methods of passing through the Magpie's Door win the greatest favour with the Fae.

It is almost as if the Door were a test of the wit and ingenuity of the traveller.

16 The Pool of Narcissus

Author: Joe Patterson

Entering the clearing, you see it: a small pool and the towering trees that stand sentinel around it. The sunlight filters through their leafy boughs, casting reflections on the perfectly still surface of the water. Large toadstools with brightly colored caps surround its edge, where the grass is particularly green, and four long-eroded stones are placed precisely at the cardinal directions: north, south, east, west. Each bears the same runic inscription, and as you run your fingers over it, you find yourself quoting the ancient verse, only semi-aware of what it is you're saying:

"Gaze deeply here, stare into me

And see what you desire to be."

The pool is mirror-like, which masks its deceptive depths. Its enchanted waters charm the mind of any sentient creature who gazes into the pool by showing the viewer at their absolute best; their most attractive form, covered in wealth, adored by others...whatever the viewer's ideal would be, this is what the Pool will show. So strong is this enchantment that men and women have perished from thirst and starvation while gazing into the eerily addictive images the Pool reveals. It is said the Pool is named for its first recorded victim, though that has not stopped others from succumbing to its powers.

This camouflages the Pool's true purpose: a gateway to the Realm of Fey. If an item is tossed into the waters, the resulting ripples break the enchantment until the waters return to perfect stillness; during this time, it is possible to see not the reflection of the forest within its depths, but images of a city peopled by Remnants of the Fey. Should a creature enter the Pool while the enchantment is disrupted, when they surface they will find they have passed from the physical realm to the home of the people of Faerie.

How they get *back*? That's an entirely different story all together.

17 The Song of the Fey

Author: Aiden Buxton

The group enters what they assume to be an old office aged by decades of time. Most of the parchment has faded to blank sheets and the desks they rest upon seem to be ready to buckle any second beneath their own weight. A stone pedestal stands at attention in the center of the room, atop it an exquisite but worn music box holds the group's sight in an almost hypnotic fashion. Unable to resist one of the group members winds the music boxes lever and releases it. A beautiful melody begins; a harp twinkles at the forefront of the tune, to the groups astonishment each strum brings a turf of green grass through the floorboards of the room. Following behind a hum channeled through perhaps a horn joins the harp, this time the ceiling slowly fades to a green leafy foliage. After that a heavy beat of a drum launches panels of wood off the walls revealing an expanse of tree trunks leading to the foliage above. As the music box sputters out the desks and accommodating paper topple in a sudden brisk of wind and disappear into the ground out of view. With the complete silence of the now fading music box a series of chirps fill the void. The land is unfamiliar but somehow inviting, the land of Faerie.



Walk in the Forest: Chris Besett – Creative Commons

18 The Thorny Way to Faerie

Author: Kai Pütz

"You journey deeper into the woods. The further you go the more the large trees start blocking out the sky with their crowns and the more you find your way blocked by thickets vying for space with another at the feet of the towering trees. Soon they do not leave a yard of the bare ground uncontested and start blocking your sight in the shadowy gloom underneath the trees. Those thickets grow large, many as high as a man and even higher, spreading their thin but flexible reddish-brown branches in odd ways so that some of them resemble... strange things. One reminds of a kowtowing cat, another of a large head with wide opened mouth and eyes, another just looks like a man spreading arms and legs out to block the path. Soon you can not avoid them as you go further, and learn that they sport many a thorn. Some of those have grown as long as a finger nail and seem to grab into your clothing and hair as you try to struggle past them, just like they would not want anyone to go through. Your attempts to cut a way through soon seem futile, with the branches too flexible to be easily hacked away and the thickets themselves far too numerous to be dealt with that way."

[This is the barrier and the gate to Faerie. After minutes, the characters will find their sight blocked by thickets every turn and move they make, ending up completely engulfed by their thorny branches as they go on. Characters trying to push through will need to pass three successful tests (of the GM's choice) in a row to avoid losing direction. For every test they attempt, the characters spend between 10 and 15 minutes in the thorny thickets. After the sixth test, the GM should assign some minor damage due to scratches and superficial cuts. After the ninth test, a random character will later note that she had lost/damaged an item from she wears on her body. After the thirteenth test, the characters are overcome by panic and despair, trying to turn and leave the place they now feel must be bewitched. They will stumble out of the thickets after about fifteen minutes and will be too afraid to go in again before next sunrise]

"Finally, after what seems like an hour [or "like hours"] to you the undergrowth lightens abruptly and so does the wood itself. Bright sunshine pours through the canopy again, forming winding paths of light between the dark shadows of the looming trees. Grass grows there, turning into a thick green carpet in the sun kissed parts of the ground. The thickets only grow close to the trees and in their shadows here, just like they finally would give way, now that you proved that you will not be kept back by them anyway. "

[The characters now have entered the realm of the fey creatures.]

19 Water Compass

Author: Dean Keith

The Water Compass is a fountain constructed of concrete. There is a small ledge, about a foot high, surrounding the fountain. Inside that are a jumble of different sized rocks. There is a raised dais in the center with a representation of a river carved into it. Around the edge is a stylized compass rose. Water bubbles up from the center, seemingly out of the river, and flows across the rose cascading over the edge onto the rocks.

When a person stands on the dais and speaks the correct incantation, they sink into the fountain, leaving this world behind and emerging in faerie.

20 Waterfall

Author: Terry Bryner

The river arched gracefully over the ledge in a lovely waterfall. The light spray ensured the little hollow remained fresh and green all year round, and the pool below was a favorite swimming spot in summer. Some of the old tales named it Fairy Falls, suggesting the fey folk could be seen there on moonlit nights. On Midsummer's Eve, some of the children sneaked away from the town celebration to visit the falls. One noticed that there seemed to be a space behind them, and they managed to climb the slippery rock and slip into it, laughing and resting, as the sun sank below the distant hills. Suddenly, they fell silent, as they noticed other silvery laughing, and then faint music, more beautiful than any had ever heard. The moon rose, and the children saw it through the waterfall...and more. There seemed to be a pool beyond it, filled with tiny, laughing fairies, with more hundreds more on the bank beyond. Wordlessly, they stared at the scene, then each other, and then rose as one and dove through the waterfall into the land of Faerie.

The fey folk scattered lightly out of their way, then came back to frolic, pulling them into their nonsense games. No questions were answered, but the children splashed and played until they were exhausted. Too tired to even think about going home, they stretched out on the bank and slept.

COMING UP:

A Preview of the Warlock's Journal Contest #19 for April 2015

The next round of the roving Warlock's Journal Contest will be held at the [Tales of a GM](#) blog. The contest does not officially open until April 1st, but the host has provided a short preview. Phil at "Tales of a GM" focuses the contest on a group called "Storm and Shield," for which he is allowing crowd development. The structure of the group itself, its nemesis, and later the headquarters of both groups, have been determined through the process of this contest! Following is a summary of the April Contest details; full information will be posted at Tales of a GM on October 1st.

The Contest

Storm & Shield: Cosmic Crisis

The roving Warlock's Journal is returning to "Tales of a GM" for April. In the previous round of the Storm & Shield contest, Tessa Starwind was voted leader of the Inner Council.

For the fourth contest we turn our attention to Hanna Crip, arch-nemesis to Storm & Shield. What dastardly plot is Hanna planning? What crisis faces the newly-appointed Tessa Starwind?

Sponsored by Ennead Games, the contest Storm & Shield: Cosmic Crisis launches at "Tales of a GM" on 1st April. Along with full entry details, there will be a complete rundown of the generous prizes on offer. Ennead Games have even provided a prize for every entry.

Visit ["Tales of a GM"](#) in early April for all the terms and conditions to the Storm & Shield: Cosmic Crisis contest.

