

Like a Mother to Me

The Warlock's Journal

May/June 2017 - Contest #32

Voting Document



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Cover Image:

MOTHER FAIRY-TALES Henry Altemus Company: Philadelphia. 1908.

Background Image:

Internet Archive Book Images. Flickr. *East of the Sun and West of the Moon*. Illustrated by Kay Nielsen. Published 1922.

The Warlock's Journal - Contest #33

“Like a Mother to Me” voting document

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 community at large, primarily fans of roleplaying games. When all the entries are in, they are shared with the community and a fan vote is taken for the most popular entry. These are the entries being offered for your voting consideration.

The topic for the May/June 2017 contest is “Like a Mother to Me.” The challenge given was to describe a character who is referred to as a mother, or stands in the place of a mother, in any genre, in 500 words or less. The entries include some very unconventional mothers indeed! Each entry is presented anonymously, listed simply in alphabetical order by title.

Voting will be handled through Survey Monkey and will be open through June 26th. You can see the voting form at:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/XZ7F5FR>

Read through the document, then go to the Survey Monkey site and vote for your two favorite descriptions. It doesn't even have to be the character you like best; if you think someone wrote a great description of something you would never use in a game, consider giving the piece your vote! After the end of the voting, the results will be tabulated. (Any tie will be broken by the Overlord, of course.) The winner will be announced by June 29th, and will receive a \$10 gift certificate to RPGNow/ DriveThruRPG from Tabletop Adventures. Following that, a final version of the contest document will be made available which acknowledges the winner and credits the author of each piece.

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

The good people of Tabletop Adventures,

And the Overlord.

Like a Mother to Me

1. The Geneticist

As she looked down at their smiling faces she couldn't help smiling herself. She felt motherly pride in them. Sure, she didn't actually give birth to them, but she did give them life. And part of her is in every one of them. When she began this experiment, so many years ago, she had no idea how far it would go. Creating modified, perfected, clones of herself.

What a crazy idea, and one that took more work than expected. Of course nothing went according to plan, entire batches were lost forcing her to start over several times. And the meddling by those controlling her money was tiresome. They tried to shut her down several times, the last one driving her work underground with a new source of funding.

But she had done it. She had taken her DNA and modified it to create the perfect being. One free from disease and abnormality, with increased strength and more acute senses, and a lifespan nearly double that of a normal human. Once she perfected the process she had started growing them into complete bodies. Soon she found a way to speed up the maturation time and could produce a fully grown, fifteen year old human in about two weeks. When they woke from their gestation pods she began referring to them as her children and preparing them for the future. And training them so she could respond to those who doubted her. Who stood in her way.

Now they stood before her, all fifty thousand of them. And they will do anything for her, as she is the only mother they have ever known.

Potential uses:

The above could be the beginning of the story/game, setting the stage for the heroes to stop her and her army.

The above could be an entry in a document describing what took place in the past setting up a potential scenario where the heroes need to free the people from her oppressive rule.

The above could be a history lesson describing the reason things are the way they are, as a setting for adventures in that world.

2. “Mother”

Mother doesn't need to only apply to a female who has kids. It can also be used to describe someone who protectively looks after others. Such as the man code-named “Mother”.

Standing six-foot-three and weighing two hundred and thirty pounds he was an imposing figure. His perpetual five o'clock shadow stood out darkly on his pale face.

The nickname “Mother” was initially given to him as a joke when he chided the team for misbehaving. It has since become a term of affection that he cherishes, as the team has become his family.

He is the tech support of the team, remaining at their base or in their mobile command center, keeping their communication units working and providing necessary information when required. Normally he works behind the scenes, away from the action. However, if the situation demands it, he will come to their rescue no matter the danger.

Potential uses:

The team could be on an operation that goes bad, and Mother needs to go save them.

The team is given an assignment and needs to complete it.

3. Mother Issues

... and the great hero married the beautiful fairy princess who nine months later gave birth to his beautiful baby girl. And they all lived happily ever after.

But the stories never really end there.

As the daughter of the hero and his fairy love grew older her beauty became obvious and the hero loved the young girl more than anything else. His wife unfortunately was not so enamored. Fairies are notoriously fickle creatures and the fairy princess began to become more and more jealous of her own daughter. Finally in a fit of pique, the fairy cursed her daughter to no longer have a face that all would gaze upon in awe but instead one that they would gaze upon in horror. Her head became one that now resembled that of a hideous spider. Numerous beady eyes dotted a furry face and mandibles that dripped poison replaced the young girl's perfect mouth. All those who saw her face now recoiled in horror and her father swore revenge on the woman he once loved.

Battling through the vast land of the fey, the great hero slew creatures born of both dreams and nightmares with equal fury. Finally he made his way into the great palace of the fairy princess to confront his estranged wife once and for all. Approaching her as she sat on her grandiose throne the hero began his well prepared speech to officially declare his desire of vengeance.

He paused his words mid sentence however, for something seemed terribly wrong.

The fairy princess sat in strange silence a moment longer before her stomach began to bulge obscenely. Suddenly she burst open from within, dozens of crawling creatures spewing forth. As the eight legged monstrosities scurried around the room, the hero saw a familiar figure poke her head from behind the throne.

The hero's daughter stepped out, a mirthful expression evident even on her inhuman visage. As she slid her mother's corpse off the throne and seated herself she spoke softly to the horrified hero.

The girl's mandibles clicked out the words as her children skittered about the floor, "Look father, I'm the mother now."

4. Mother of all Summers

The monarch of the Kingdom of Eternal Summer is Queen Titania, affectionately known as the Mother of All Summers. Her rule over the Seelie Court is strongly maternal in nature. Queen Titania is fond of music and dancing, which drives the endless feasting of the Kingdom.

Her benign nature is reflected in the weather and terrain of Summerland.

She is kind, charming, beautiful and fun-loving, all traits of an idyllic eternal summer. The Queen treats the members of her Court as her children, dispensing small gifts and kind words to everyone. Her most common gifts are glowing gold coins, a golden halo formed when she passes a hand over a petitioner's head, or a yellow flower from her cloak. Those who perform a great service for the Kingdom are rewarded with a lily from her bodice, plucked out by the Queen.

At her noon meal in the Summer Palace, the Queen dispenses justice and gifts of food to her many petitioners. In matters of justice, Titania insists upon hearing both sides in every dispute. She aims to negotiate an agreement which both parties can willingly keep. The Queen often calls additional witnesses if an initial settlement cannot be struck. In extremis, Titania will impose a judgement, but she greatly prefers to find common ground.

Titania is a green aldryami, a plant biped who resembles a classic fantasy elf. She has silvery skin, like a smooth silver birch, with a slight wood grain pattern. In place of hair, Titania has a cascade of lime-green leaves, usually adorned with shining jewels.

Aldryami have no need of clothes, but Titania likes wearing a bodice of white flowers which bloom from her skin. She also favours a long cloak of yellow flowers, which leaves a trail of petals and the occasional glowing yellow flower as she walks.

5. Old Mother Hubbard

She is referred to as “Old Mother Hubbard”, but only in the stories that we tell to children. Her outward appearance is that of an unspeakably ancient woman. Gnarled, bent, and pitifully thin, one cannot even imagine one of the elvenkind as having seen as many years as the grey, glazed eyes of Old Mother Hubbard, set in a pale and weathered face that one would swear must have felt the breeze stirred by the breath of the gods as they sang the worlds into being. Seldom seen, and never without her faithful canine companion, she appears in tattered rags hobbling alongside the emaciated hound.

She is said to appear to those who are selfish and greedy in their plenty. Most especially to the misers who have hoarded wealth and food for themselves and turn a deaf ear to the pitiful cries of the needy in their community. The stories vary in details, but the theme is the same. Some local pinch-penny encounters her shuffling along the road. She asks only for scraps. Not for herself, but for her poor dog. Rejected and scoffed by the glutton, she asks again, with a voice that sounds for all the world more like the creaking of timbers than a human voice, if he is sure he has nothing for a poor old woman’s dog and is rebuffed again. As he turns to leave, he hears the old woman say to her companion, “You poor old dog. Why don’t you get yourself a bone?” The stories end with the unfortunate man found in several pieces over a stretch of road outside the village.

Old Mother Hubbard can be useful as a spirit of vengeance or punishment for the pantheon in any fantasy game setting, though what alignment she may fall under may be the subject of spirited fantasy theological debate. She might be a roaming spirit drawn to the despair of the local poor, or to areas of drought or famine. She might be a rumor, an object lesson, or just a story told around the campfire. Or a party might even be hired to protect a superstitious local miser who feels threatened.