

# HARPY

Appearances can be so deceiving. Those that gaze upon my hideous features and sparse feathers on my old wings would recoil in disgust, yes, but sight can give such bad counsel. Those that hear with their souls would know the beauty of my song – it would draw them to my sweet embrace, tight and final, as I rip out their hearts.

These caves are foreign to me. Creatures of the air have no place in these depths. Even with the gaping chasms created by the vast caverns here, with the vaulting ceilings of the largest caves, the air is still stale and motionless. I miss the sky and I miss the wind. I miss my sisters too. Our coven made a home in the high cliffs overlooking the mountain pass far to the south. The promise of glorious feasting brought us there and we were not disappointed. Human travelers used the road often. I can take or leave human flesh, but many of them rode horses and horse meat is by far the more delicious! Our songs would lure the riders away from the path and they would follow, blinded by the desire to get closer to our sweet voices. Truly dangerous to not heed your surroundings up in the mountains and many of them fell to their doom, leaving but broken carcasses. Delicious broken carcasses for me and my sisters!

Then that awful man came. The songs had no effect on him and the weapon in his hands spewed death. The wounds that his shots inflicted on my sisters seemed like merely scratches at first, but they got infected and caused terrible pain. I sat over them as they died, and my song grew sorrowful, full of powerless rage. But no one was there to share my pain, just cold stone and the sky.

I had to leave the corpses of my sisters up there and I flew away, seeking refuge, terrified that the man with his poisoned arrows would find me too. Long weeks of persisting on rodents and birds stretched out as I moved only during the night, not daring to sing to attract more nutritious prey. A cave up in the mountain range led to a deep opening – as I explored it further, I found it leading into a vast complex of interconnected caves, home to all sorts of creatures, kobolds and orcs and hobgoblins, with even stray gnolls descending into the depths now and again.

As I soon found out, those creatures were quite susceptible to my song as it enthralled them and led them to me, dumbfounded, heedless of dangers around and ahead. My feasts grew more rewarding. There were no horses down here, but I settled for what I could get. The cliffs I called home were littered by bones and most inhabitants of these tunnels knew to keep away.

And then I saw him one day, making his way unsteadily through the large mushroom-covered cavern. The hat, I would recognize the hat anywhere. The murderer of my sisters. My first reaction was that of horror, but, well hidden high by the cave's ceiling I knew I was out of his sight. I noticed by his stumbling gait that he was wounded. The few spots where he leaned against a stone left bloody markings on the moss. I also noticed he was unarmed – no crossbow this time. A wicked smile distorted my face. The time for revenge was at hand. He would pay tenfold for the pain he inflicted on my sisters.

Let my song be the last thing he hears.