



# The Chronicle

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# The Chronicle

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# I. *Praise the True Gods!*

---

Those who remember may be blessed. For only memory and faith in the True Gods canst save us from heinous usurpers.

Be thou aware of temptations and avoid curses! The Skies be chaste, whilst the Earth be rotten and infested with vermin! Refreshing be the air that filleth man's lungs with spirit but treacherous be the soil that shalt devoureth his body. Crave not the gold that be hidden beneath the ground, for it does spoil feeble minds with madness.

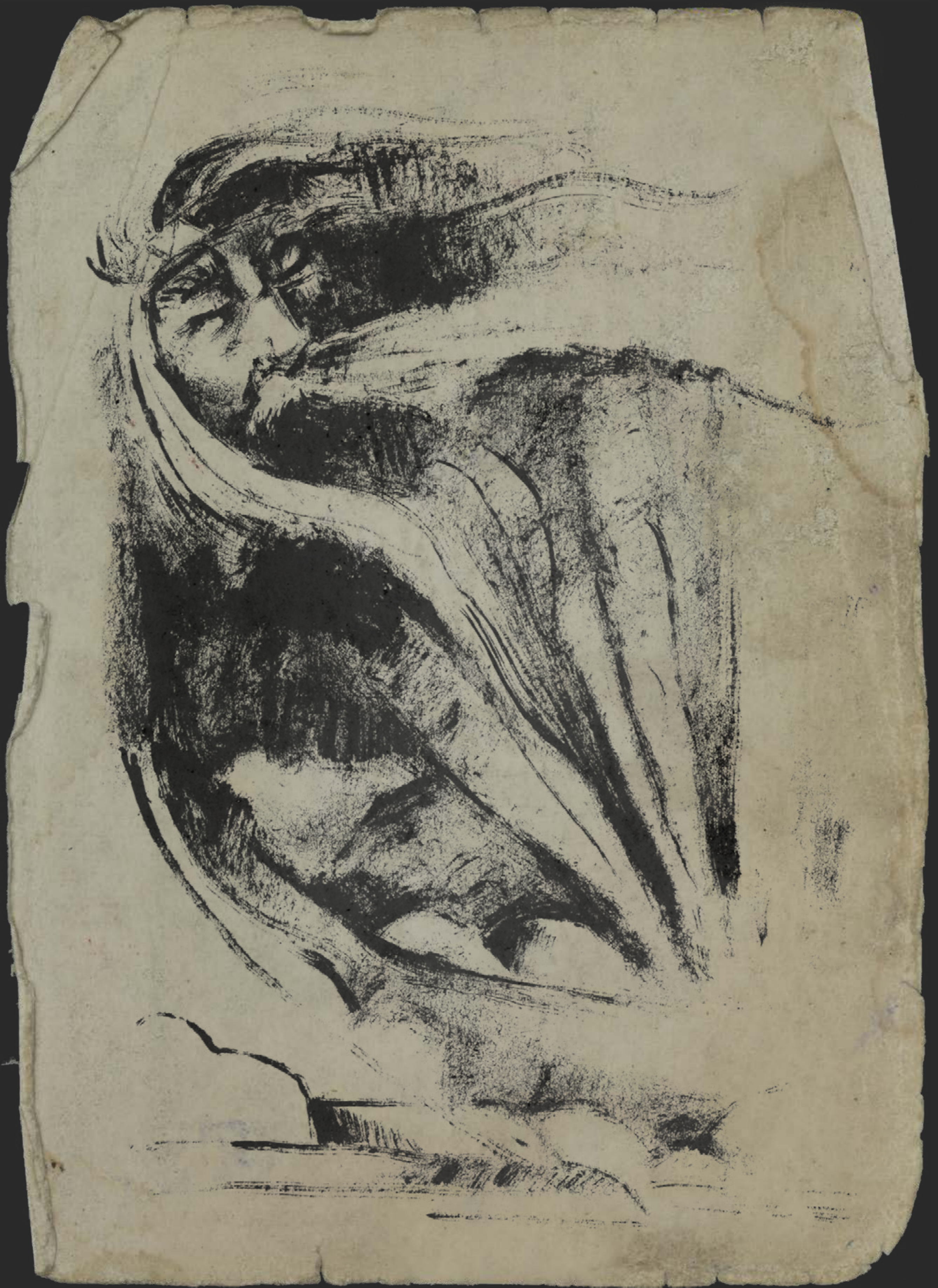
Remember thou this tale and save yourselves!

For I am Ga'al, the faithful Whisperer of Dolya the Divine Daughter, for countless generations the son of the man who was the son of the woman thus created with her body and soul with the blessing of merciful Mokosh.

That is the testimony of the Ancient Age and the only truth! The time has passed, but the memory does remain. The lore shalt live together with our descendants in a time yet to come.

Praise be to the True Gods!





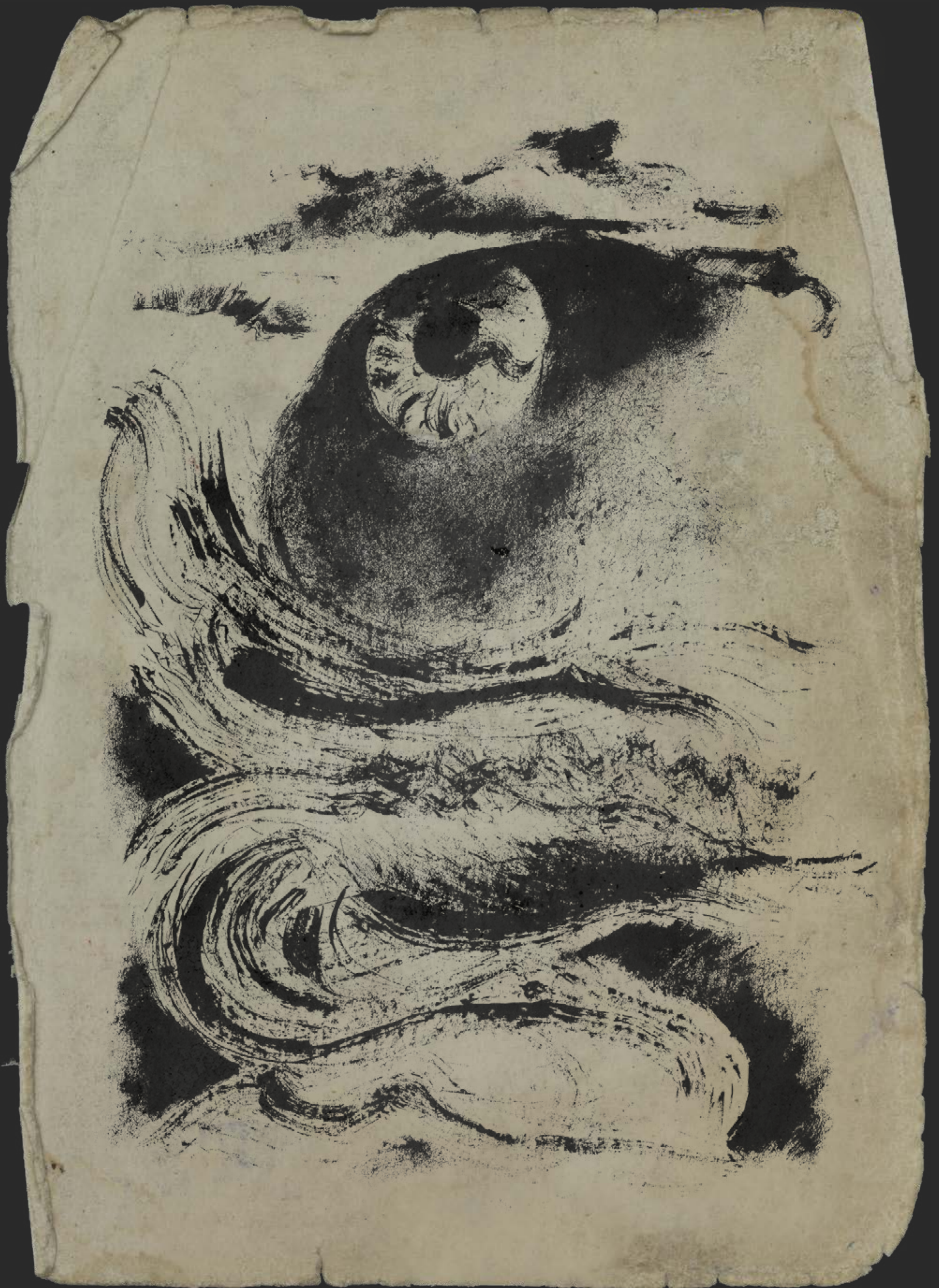
## 2. *The Awakening of the First*

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In the beginning, were the Skies and the Skies were vast, good, and brimming with power. Ne'er shalt human minds be of the capacity to comprehend the peace and wisdom that did fill the Skies so. All things in the universe were in the form of the most sacredest of breath, the untouched essence of the soul, divinity of divinities, the beginning of all life.

And then the Skies, good in their nature, awoke as if once aslumber. Arose they did and condensed like dew, and their consciousness shone o'er the world such as the source of infinity. Lo, 'twas the birth of Praboh, known as the Father of Peoples, the Lord in the Skies, the Breath Giver, mild as a breeze and strong as a storm.

His land was wonderful, forever bright, soft, infinite, and devoid of worries.



### 3. *Infinite Source*

---

Praboh was good and His land most beautiful, for 'twas an emptiness that couldst accommodate all things. His was the power to create, and what once became filled with His divine breath couldst exist and adorn the Skies. Howe'er, naught of all creation brought Him joy, as He couldst predict all things. Empty was the creation, being as weightless and bright as Praboh Himself.

And Praboh did drift in the Skies with naught but longing for the unknown! His desire was to but see the end of His land, alas, His thought extended with no end, overwhelming Him with the infinite space.

Ne'er couldst He encounter anyone within the entirety of infinity, and scared by His loneliness, the silence, and the predictability of the Skies, He began to weep.

Torrential tears cascaded from those eyes most divine and poured they like waterfalls. When thousands of divine breaths swung the emptiness, the ocean shone upon Praboh's eyes.



## 4. *Soothing Loneliness*

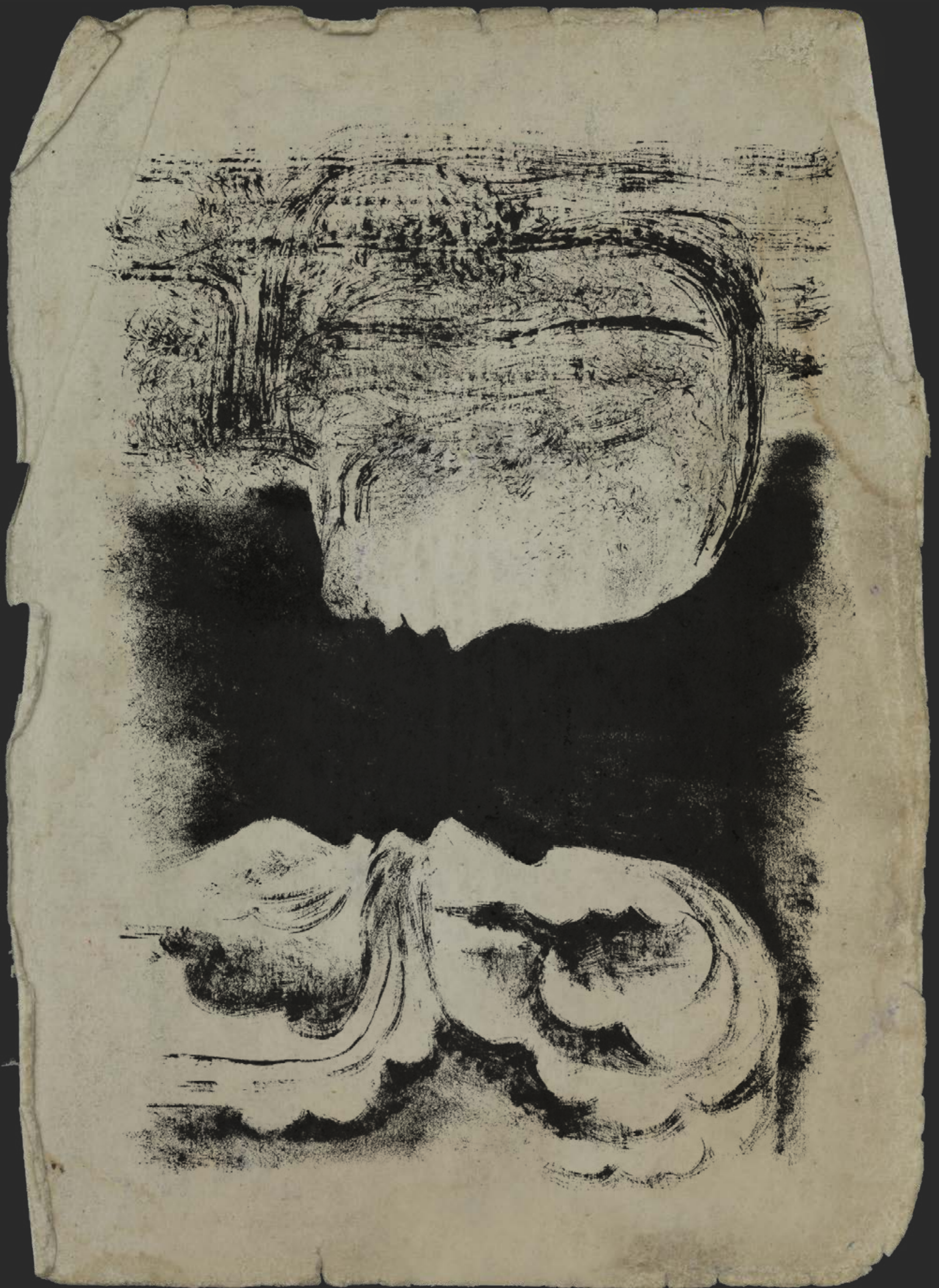
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When Praboh saw His reflection upon the surface of the ocean, His heart did become pierced with despair. For now He was followed by His silent reflection, wherever He went, and His loneliness thus seemed ever more terrible!

Praboh complained before His reflection, swaying the surface of the ocean with His breath – the eternal companion of His words! – swaying thus as like a mother wouldst swing her crying child.

Having confessed He all worries and hopes, Praboh, distressed, fell into a fitful slumber at last. Upon awaking, He did see, next to His reflection, the silhouette of another being. Try as He might, He couldst not see through the impenetrable surface of the water that normally wouldst be so bright and as clear as crystal.

Praboh ceased to be the only and complete as the matter of the Skies divided. This new element was equal to Him but totally different, and thus, mysterious. And then, Praboh drew closer to the surface of the water.



## 5. *The Water of Life*

---

Praboh gazed upon the skin of the ocean, and He could neither see through it nor look away.

Below His reflection in the water, all of a sudden, He did notice a being so fair and so full of kindness and compassion that she stole the divine breath from His chest. Praboh stood there as if frozen, enchanted by this view.

Thus, the water gained life, and Mokosh the Arcane and Merciful was born. And since they both came from the same emptiness, and there was no one else but them, the beings wished to draw near. But different in nature they were, and ne'er couldst unite, though as close they were as two sides of a coin. Separated by an endless horizon, they couldst ne'er touch.





## 6. *The Birth of Jealousy*

---

Fertile and rich is love, and, like ground for a new house, solid for foundation. It is like a bridge that joineth and like a road that leadeth thou forward. But be it prone to avarice? Does it not drag thou in like a bog and devour its own crops to grow them again and again?

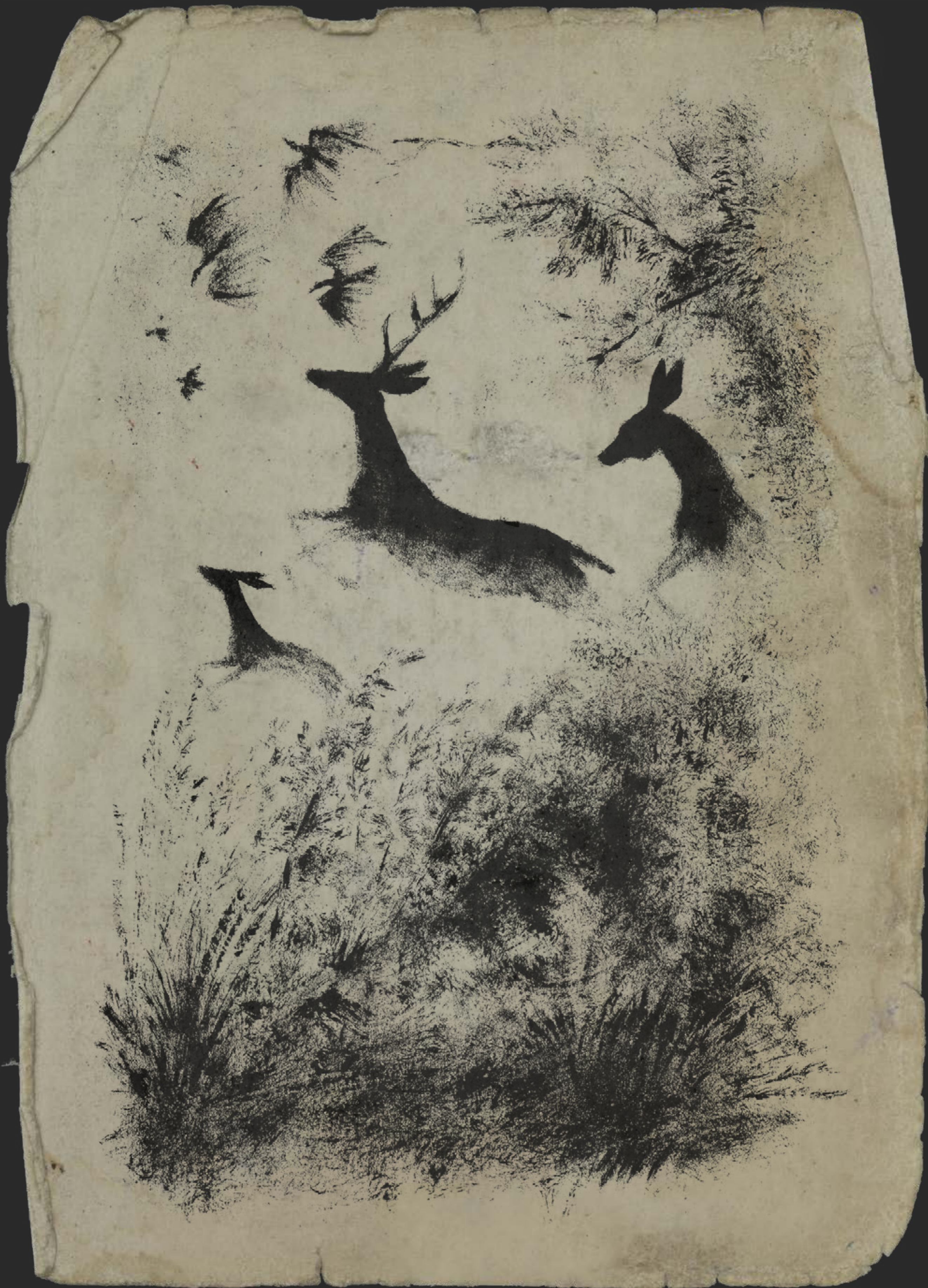
And both true and beautiful was the love that Praboh and Mokosh bestowed upon each other. From a cloud of their breaths and waves emerged a sandy shore, golden, soft, and warm.

And so they, as Gods, descended on the golden Earth to join in an embrace, and their divine bodies did burst with longing and fulfillment, fright and relief, joy and sadness, curiosity and bliss.

The Earth trembled, warm from their divine juices, and it did awaken from the touch of divine feet: but 'twas not the object of this desire nor affection! And Earth understood it and shook to its very core with jealousy.

Thus did awaken Veles, inebriated with divine love, though 'twas not meant for him. His lips did run with desire, and

the divine power of creation sparkled from his fingers. And  
this Praboh did see, as did Mokosh, also.



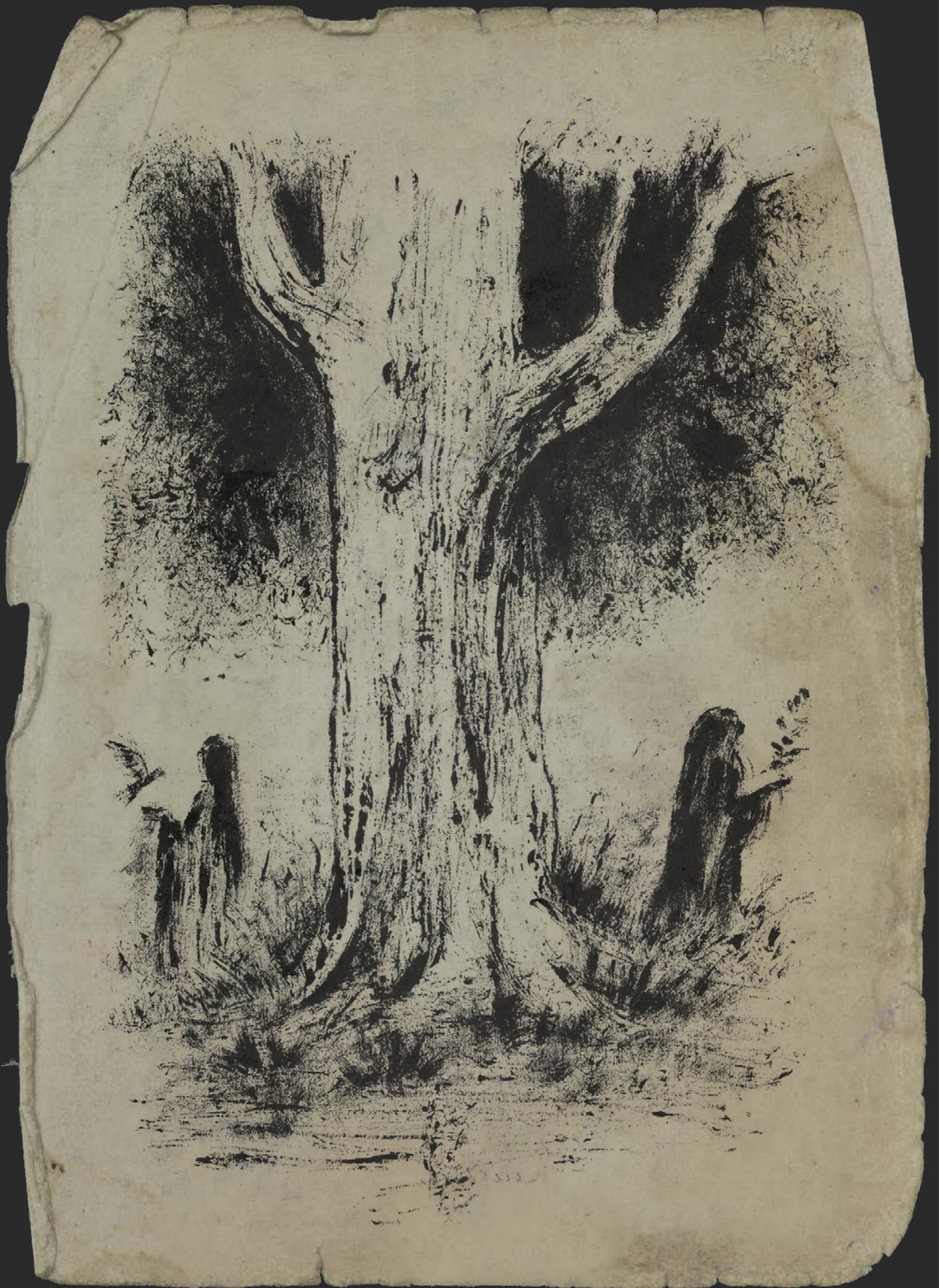
## 7. *Veles's Work*

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Though it be the Wind that shapeth mountains, spreadeth sands, and in vales whispers, naught was dearer to Earth than Water, for it did embrace its shores, and did caress its rifts with a myriad of silvery fingers, then did soak through its cracks to reach the deepest and darkest of its caves.

And so Veles did fall in love with Mokosh and chose her alone to be the one to quench his thirst. And he couldst feel her, and her touch, and the strength of her divine energy, for she was the Life, the Mercy, and the Patience.

Veles drew Water from a stream and moistened the sands, red and heated from his divine love. From a clay thus made, he began to form plants and animals, and when he liked their shape, he breathed life into them, using divine power overheard from enchanted whispers carried by the wind.



## 8. *The Shadow of Recklessness*

---

And beautiful was the world, lush and bustling with omnipresent creatures. So great was its fertility and softness that Praboh did believe 'twas a creation of His lover, Mokosh, prepared for Him out of affection and gratitude. With not a worry did He watch the plants grow and animals roam, and it did fill His eyes and heart with joy. And so He waited for His lover's sweet call, convinced she would soon present her gift and show Him around the world.

Meanwhilst, Mokosh did see Praboh's breath and power in the emerging creation and did believe it be a gift from her lover, prepared for her from faithfulness and devotion. And so she did decide not to disturb Him, but give Him time, so that he may finish His gift in peace.

Still, curious she was and filled with admiration for the thick tree trunks, vibrant flowers, swift-footed deer, and tireless bears. And so she did follow them in secret, away from Praboh's eyes, for she did not want to faze Him by seeing His creation unfinished.



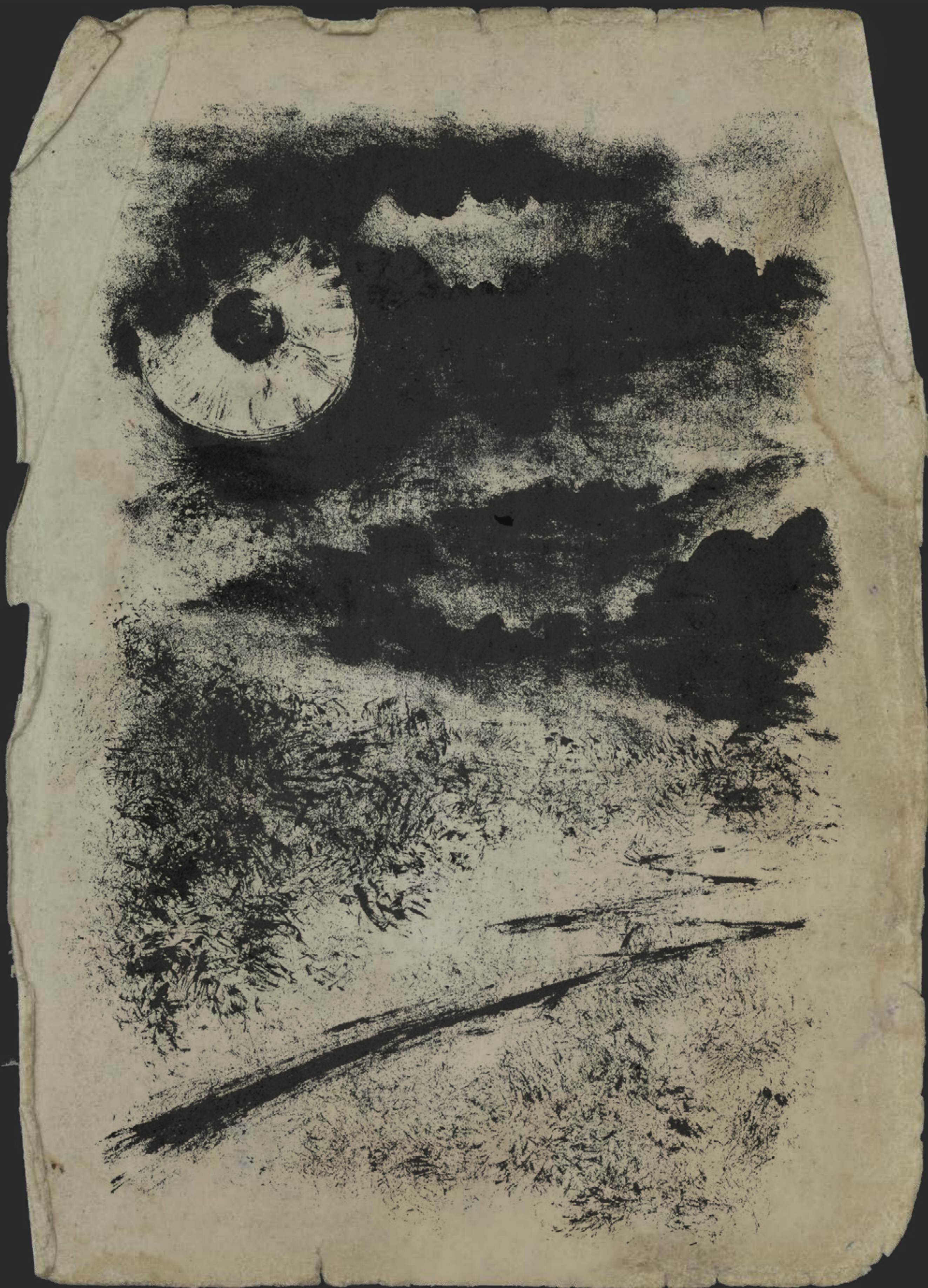


## 9. *The Underworld*

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Mokosh did wander the world 'til she did find herself at the foot of a great mountain. 'Twas formed from soil drifted by wind and uplifted by tremors. In solid rock, she did find a dark, cold cave, formed so by a touch of water, both warm and tender. Tired from the journey, she did reach towards a crystal-clear stream, with hopes 'twould give her strength. With a start, she did realise the stream's bed was covered with gold! 'Twas beautiful, tempting, and did sparkle more than any thing she had yet set eye upon in the world thus far. Upon lifting her head, she did see the same gold within a darker part of the cave, and it did flicker with promises no word couldst describe.

And so, Mokosh, trusting and curious, did enter the dark tunnel that led to the gates of Veles's realm, and in that moment, the Earth did shake, causing the entrance to collapse and trapping Mokosh in the Underworld: for 'twas the only way out!



## 10. *The Return of Loneliness*

---

The waters of the world grew ever darker and ever muddier. When the currents stopped flowing, a musty stillness filled the air.

Then, Praboh did descend, filled with concern, for Mokosh had yet to summon Him to present her gift. The length and breadth of the world He did travel, but His beloved was to be found nowhere.

Praboh did call and did listen, but 'twas all for naught. All He did hear were the screams of animals, their speech tangled and offering no advice.

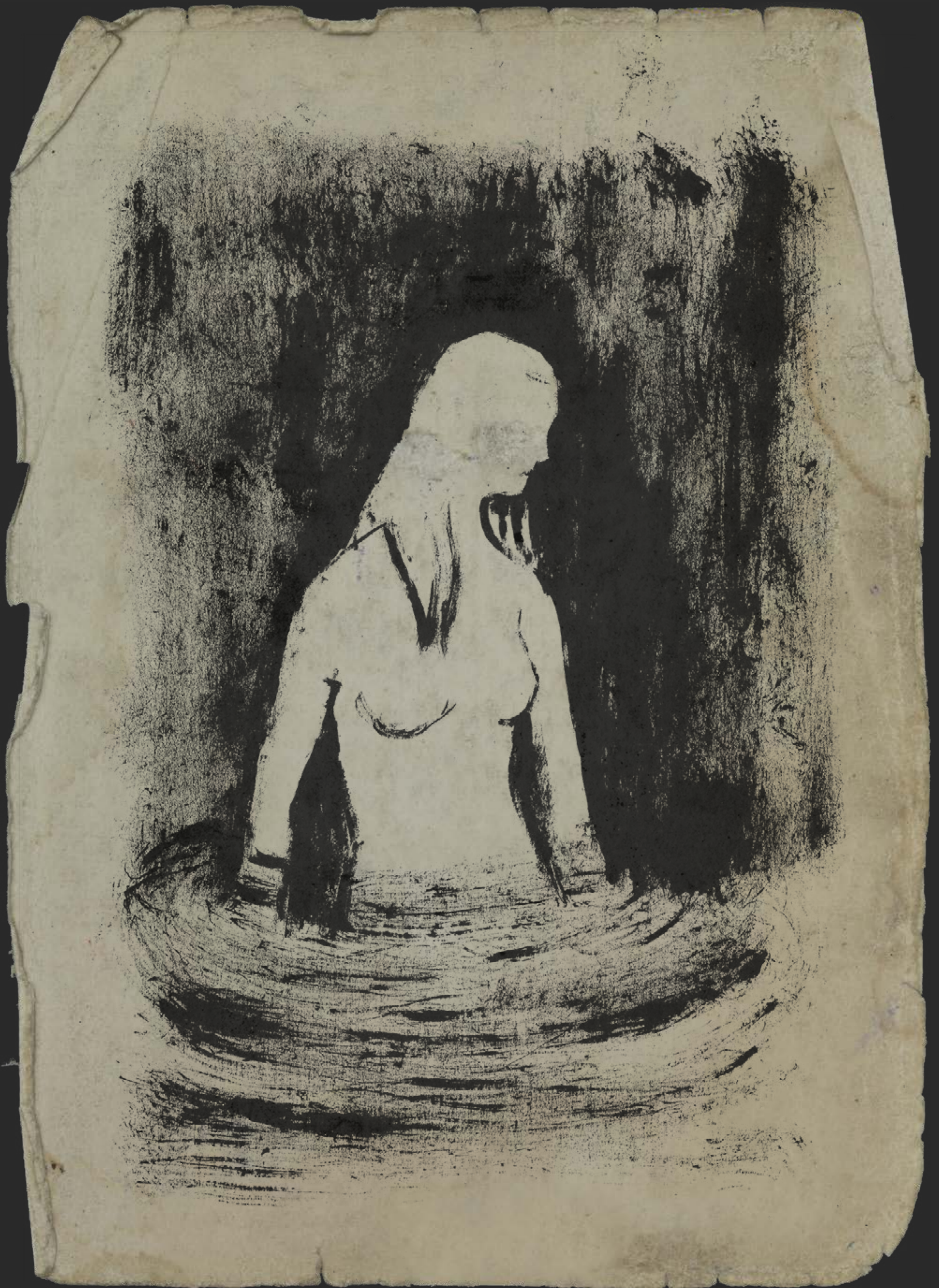
Returning to the Skies, Praboh did look for traces of His lover from above, for He did realise that if not found upon the Surface, she must be hidden in a place no eye couldst penetrate: underground.



## II. *Thunder Incarnated*

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Praboh did become agitated and bewildered from all His woe, anger, and fear, and His power vibrated in the shivering air. And dark clouds did billow low in the sky, gliding o'er the Earth and scaring each animal, one and all. A great storm did break out, that did crack with flashes of divine power and shed divine tears, and the winds did rage between the forests and once again did stir waves and river currents. The Skies did thunder! Cursing, calling, despairing, and taking oaths. And then, from between all the lightning and thunder, from the great ferocity, bravery, and righteousness: Perun was born! And he was the divine Avenger and the enemy of all Praboh's enemies. The pillars of the Skies and Earth trembled, for Perun's power extended high o'er the clouds and far down to solid ground. The animals did flee before him, and the sturdiest of trees did also bow down to him. Fiery was the Lord of Thunder and ever sure of himself. Thus, since there were only three other gods in the world – Praboh of The Skies, Mokosh of the Water, and Veles of the Earth – Perun turned his vengeful eye upon the Lord of the Underworld and hurled an accusation as if hurling the first bolt of lightning.



## 12. *The Creation of Woman*

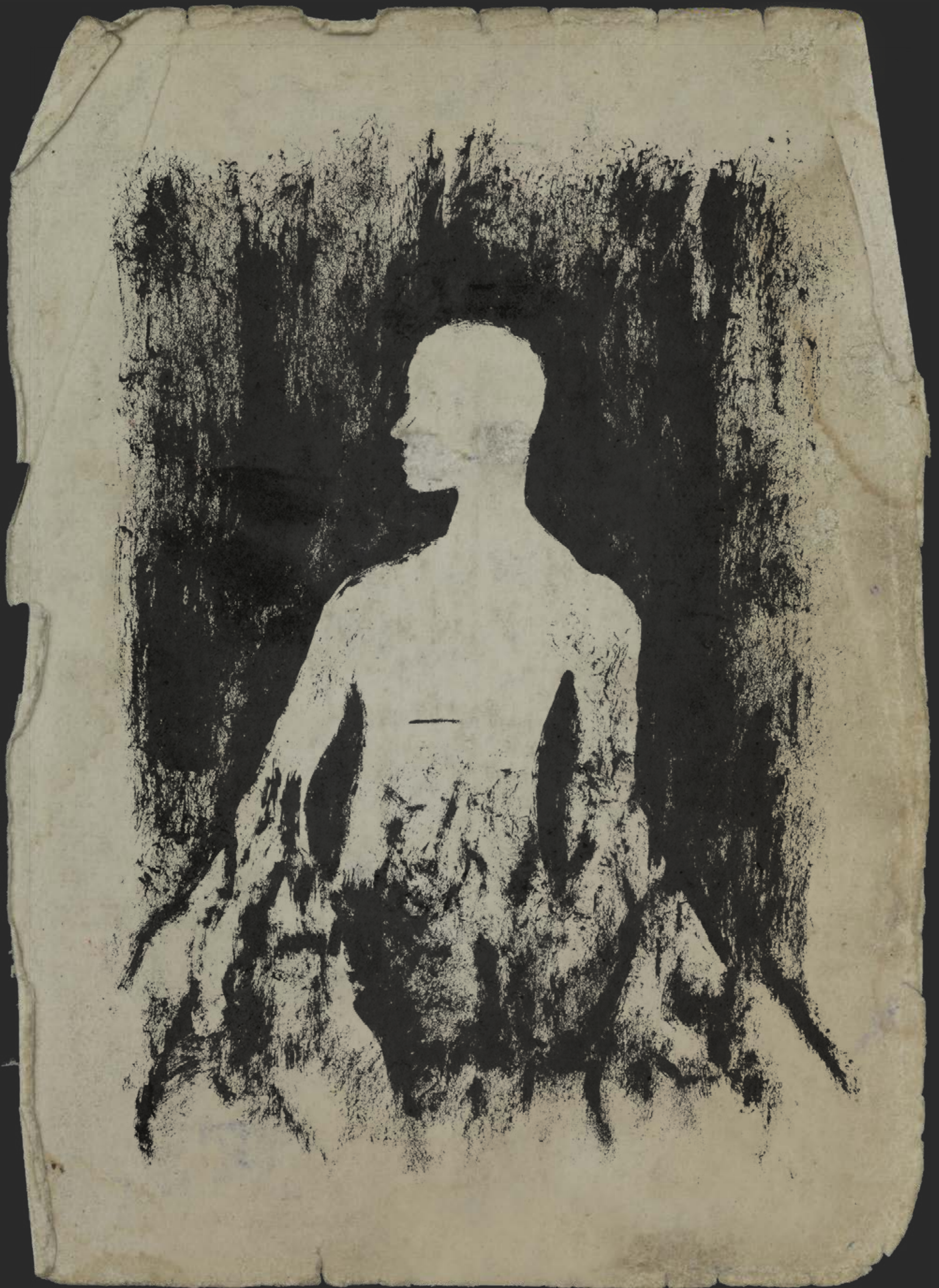
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Perun Did thunder and hurl much lightning, but his power couldst not reach beneath the stones where Veles did hide in the Underworld. Still, an oath had been sworn to Praboh, and so, he persisted, time and time again falling into a battle frenzy then losing strength in silence.

Longing for Mokosh made Praboh wither, and so, He descended to Earth. But 'twas dirty and hard and reminiscent of Veles, and so, He went to the raging river to feast upon it like on a memory. Once there, He drew upon its pure water, and with His divine hands, did form the crystalline drops into longed-for shapes.

And thus, Praboh created the human being, and He called it a woman. With His breath, He did move her lungs and heart, and the Water of Life that did fill her body provided her with kindness and love, patience and understanding, mystery and fertility.

Praboh placed the woman upon the ground and did watch her. Made in Mokosh's image, she was full of curiosity but was also a mystery herself.

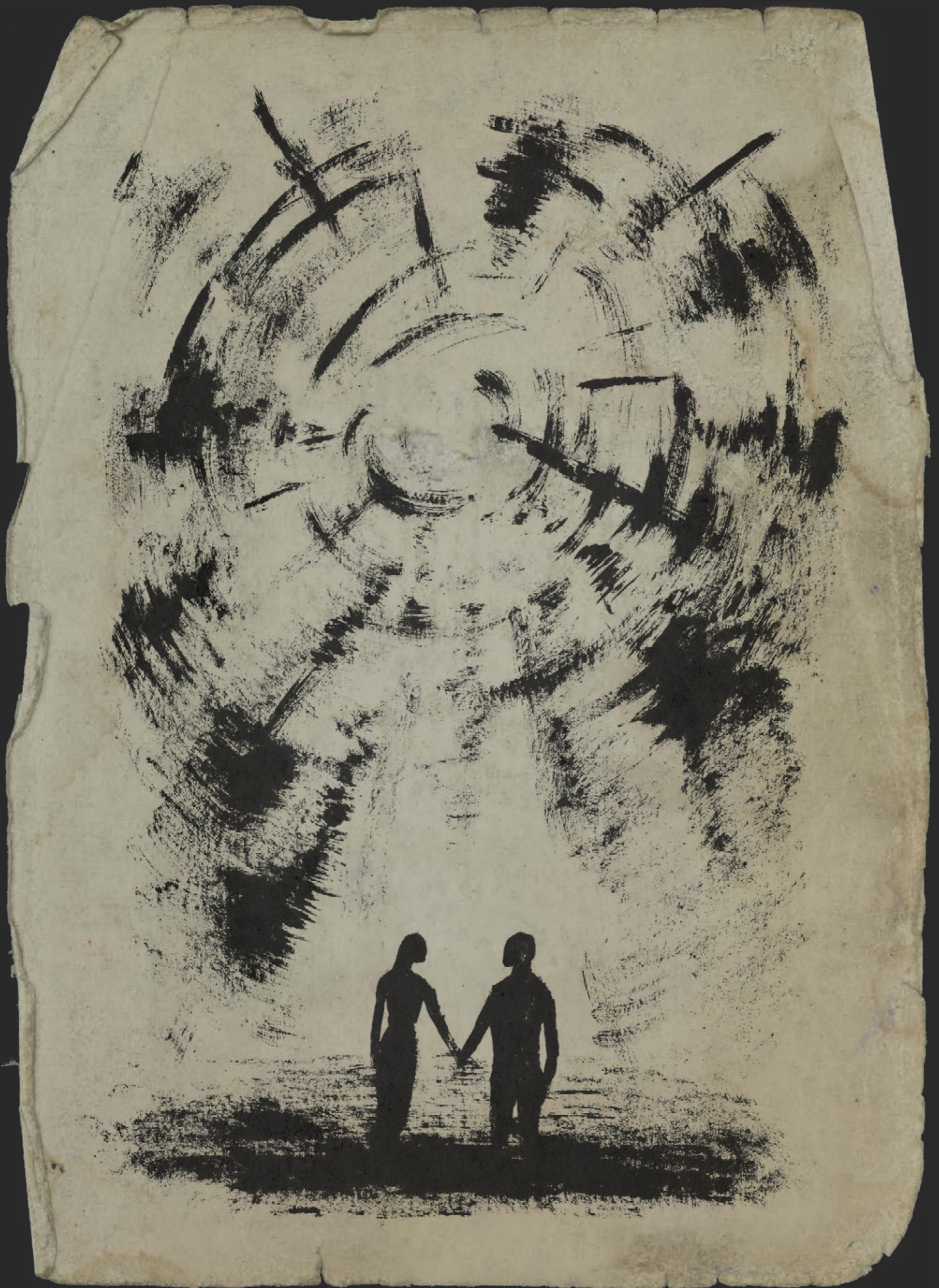




## 13. *The Creation of Man*

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The woman did look beneath each stone and did follow the tracks of animals, but afraid was she of dark caves, did avoid bears, and lacked the strength for long journeys. More than that, alone she was, and frail. And so, Praboh did descend to Earth once more and did take the hated Velesian rock: for wise He was! Earth couldst not live without its beloved Water, and 'twas hard, so like a mountain, 'twould endure rains, gales, and storms alike. And so, He chose the most durable of boulders and did carve it in His own image, then did breathe life into it and called it a man. Tough was his creation, like a rock, and it loved the woman as Veles and Praboh would love Mokosh, shouldst they merge into but one being. The man was as tender as he was violent and as caring as he was jealous. He did protect the woman from beasts, did feed her, and did accompany her upon the farthest of journeys.



## 14. *The Rise of Daboh*

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Seeing them multiply, Praboh did rejoice, for beings made in Mokosh and His image loved one another and walked the Earth, beautiful, happy, and mightier than all else.

Even happier, He was, seeing curious and greedy humans spread across the world, for He did believe that with the help of man, the woman will find the gates to the Underworld, where He couldst feel Mokosh's presence with His divine breath.

Then, His joy, hope, and pride did shine up in the Skies like a great torch of divine power, and the Sun came into being, taking all of the light for itself.

The Sun was most beautiful, bright, and hot, and therefore the people did worship it more eagerly than the invisible wind that filled their lungs. But Praboh worried not, for the Sun was His child and was meant to serve the people so they couldst continue the search for Mokosh.

Full of divine power and fuelled with human prayers, the Sun awakened, and thus, Daboh, the guardian of people and Praboh's steward, was born.



## 15. *The Age of Happiness*

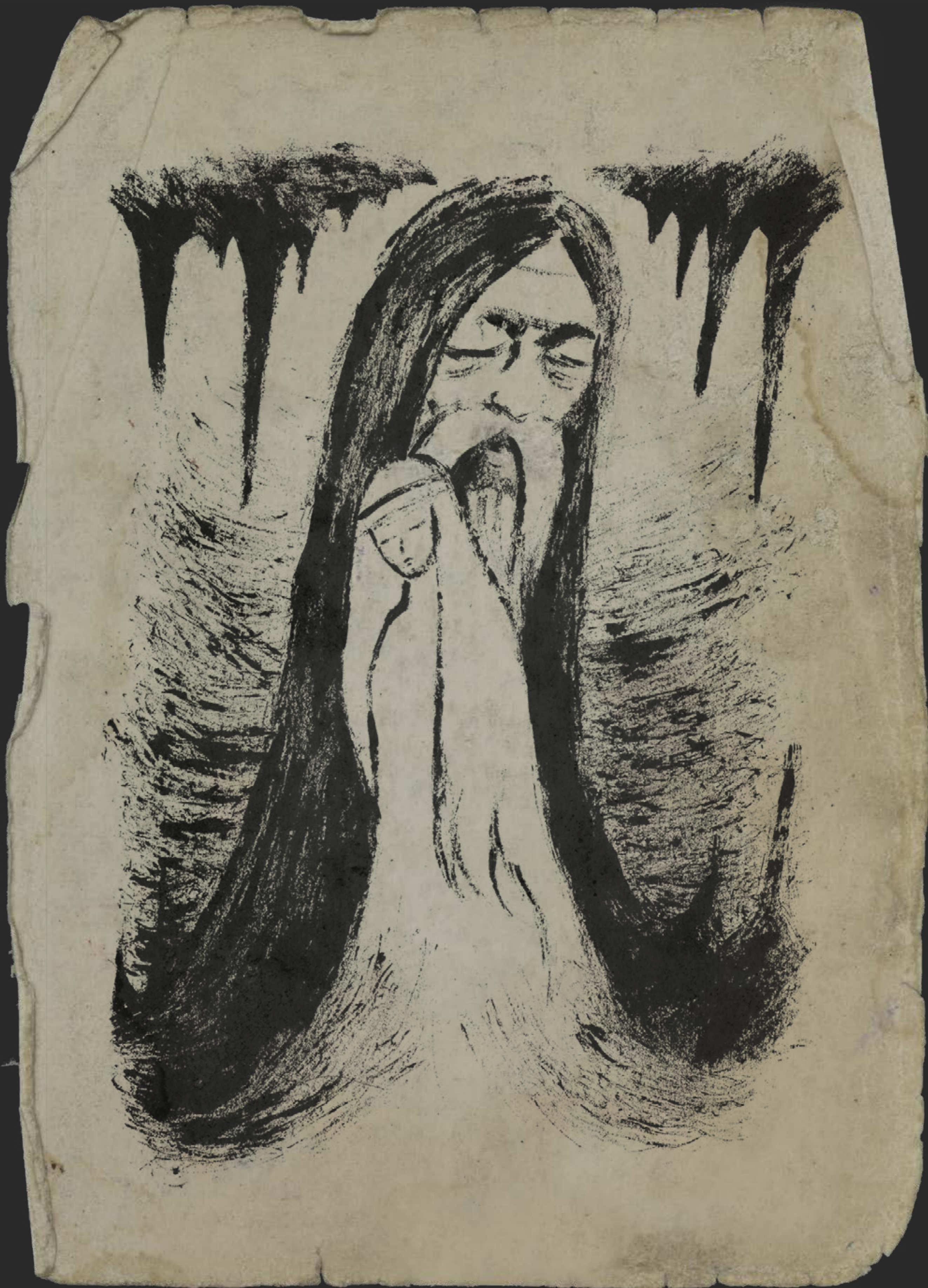
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Life was good for the women and men upon the Earth. Praboh's breath did fill their lungs, Daboh's brightness did delight their eyes, and Perun's might did fill their hearts with piety and trust in divine power.

People spread to all parts of the world to live amongst plants and animals, cutting down trees for houses and hunting game for their meat and hides.

Life was good for them, for they lacked naught, and the gods protected them from hunger, cold, and beasts. And so they multiplied, and the more there was of them, the more Praboh rejoiced. He believed there would soon be no piece of land the people had not discovered and no secret they had not confessed to gods: and the gods enjoyed their prayers, for they were sweet as nectar and did fill them with power.

Meanwhilst, the Earth did change under the influence of the humans. Tree branches did kneel before the blows of their axes, hunted beasts did lie in rows, and fertile thickets did turn into silent deserts.



## 16. *The Golden Kingdom*

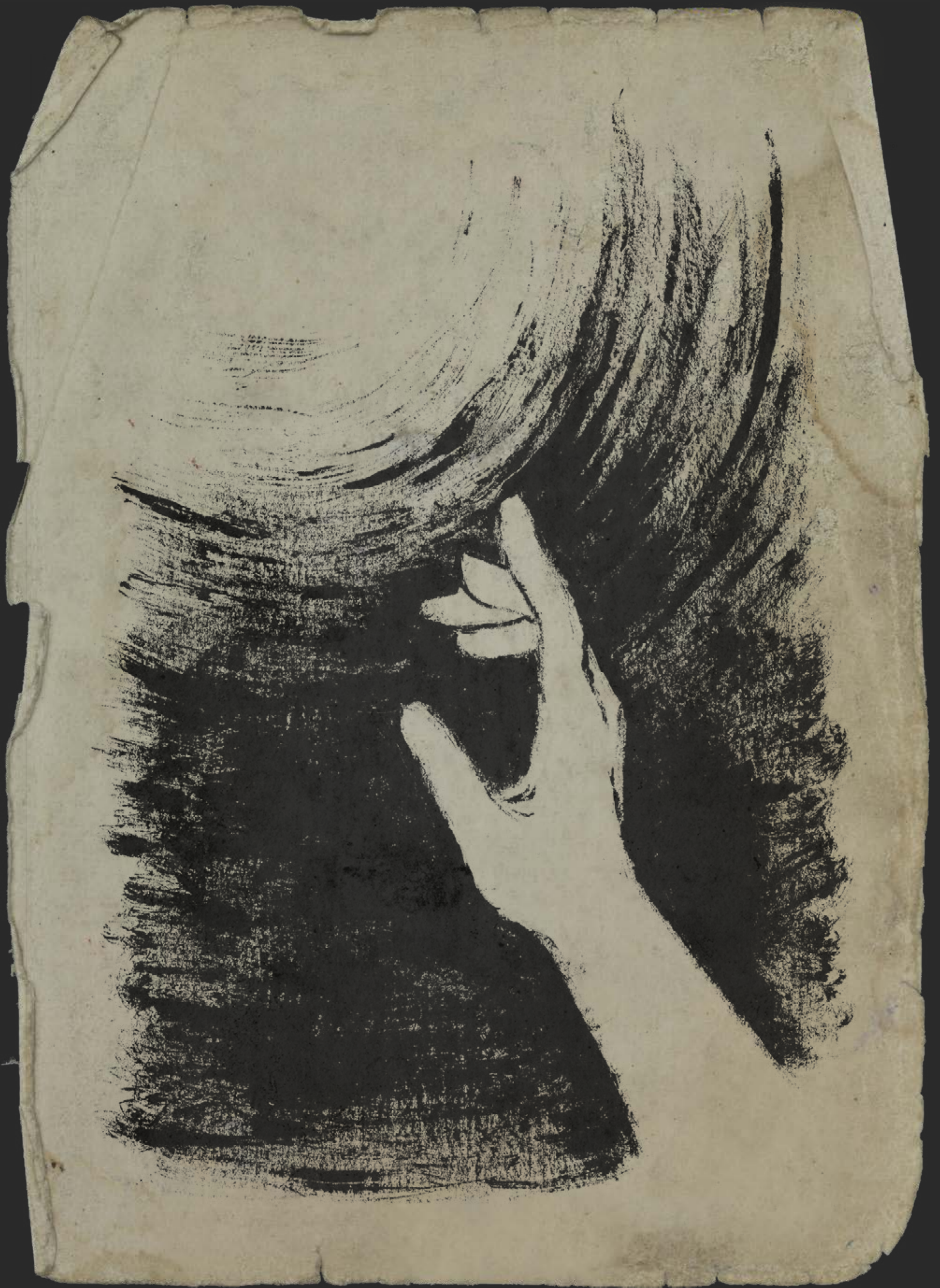
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Away from crisp air and rapid waters, Mokosh did wander the caves amongst dead and musty puddles.

Veles did then appear, full of gloom but also thirst, desire, and longing. The goddess was frightened, though she did not reveal it.

The vestibules of his kingdom were uninviting and filled with meandering vermin, but as Veles did lead her onwards, the sights did change most drastically. Oh, how marvellous were his caverns! Rising ribs of mountains filled with jewels and covered with gold, all glittering with power to dispel darkness and please the eye!

Beauty was aplenty in Veles's kingdom but lacking life, and Mokosh did feel sorry for him, as she did recognise his longing. When he looked at her with sadness and silence, he saw a miracle of life, but one that couldst fall apart should it ever be touched by him. He couldst only sculpt dead objects in the Underworld, and whatever plants and animals he had made on the Surface ventured no further than the vestibules of his realm.





## 17. *Praboh's Gift*

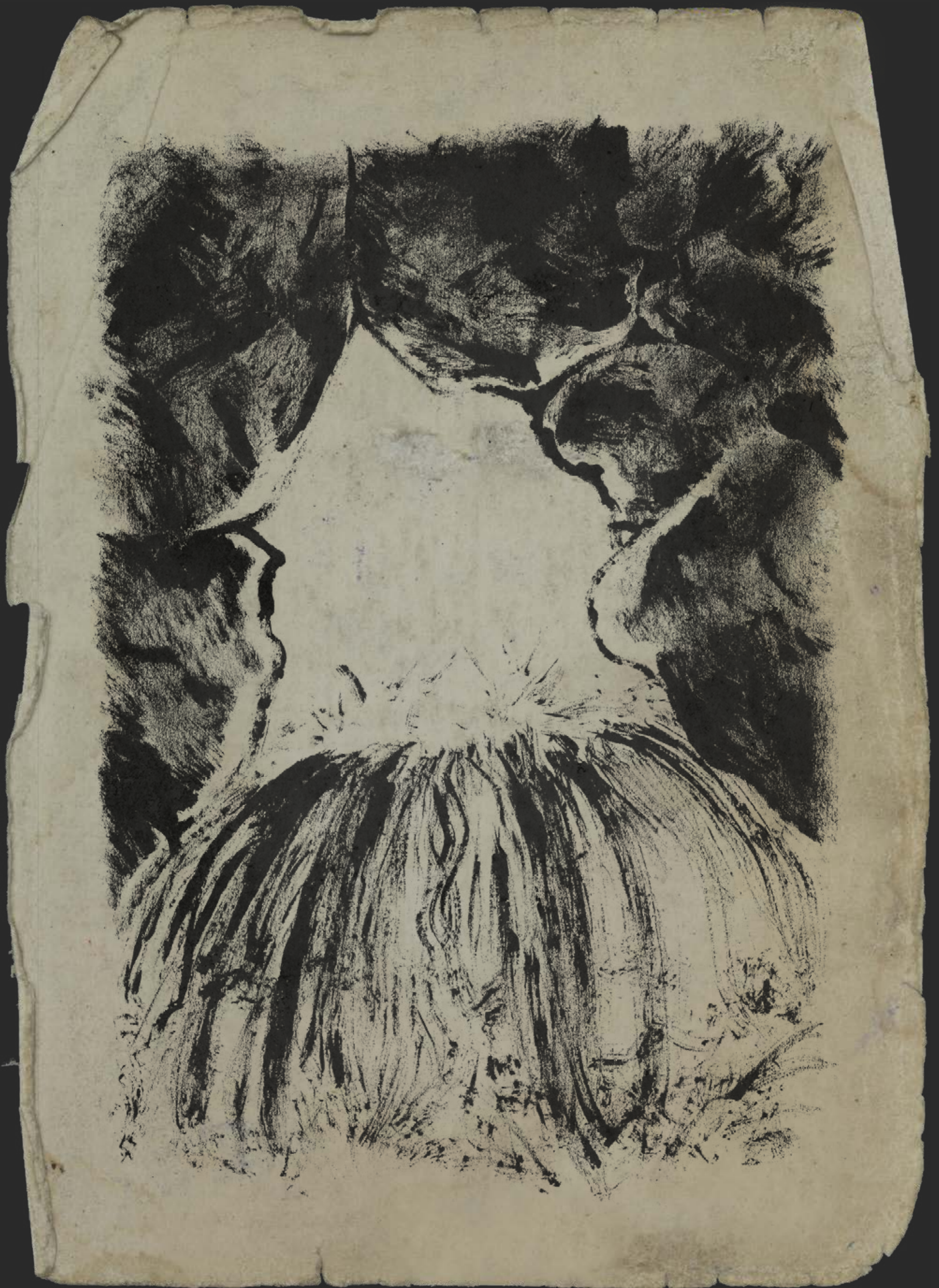
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Thus did Mokosh look with longing towards the Surface of the Earth. She looked at her dear animals, at wonderful plants, at raging streams, and at the singing wind that did make everything move with its power.

Then, amongst the creatures, she did see a new one, and 'twas unlike any other: for it looked similar to herself! 'Twas the woman, and by her side walked the man, who was similar in likeness to Praboh.

Mokosh was quick to conclude that they were created for her, in honour and in memory of her and Praboh's love, and she was fond of them.

But Veles saw them also, and he did grit his teeth with envy. The Lord of the Underworld was most furious that people multiplied with no care, destroying his creation, and Mokosh's joy broke his heart.



## 18. *The End of Timelessness*

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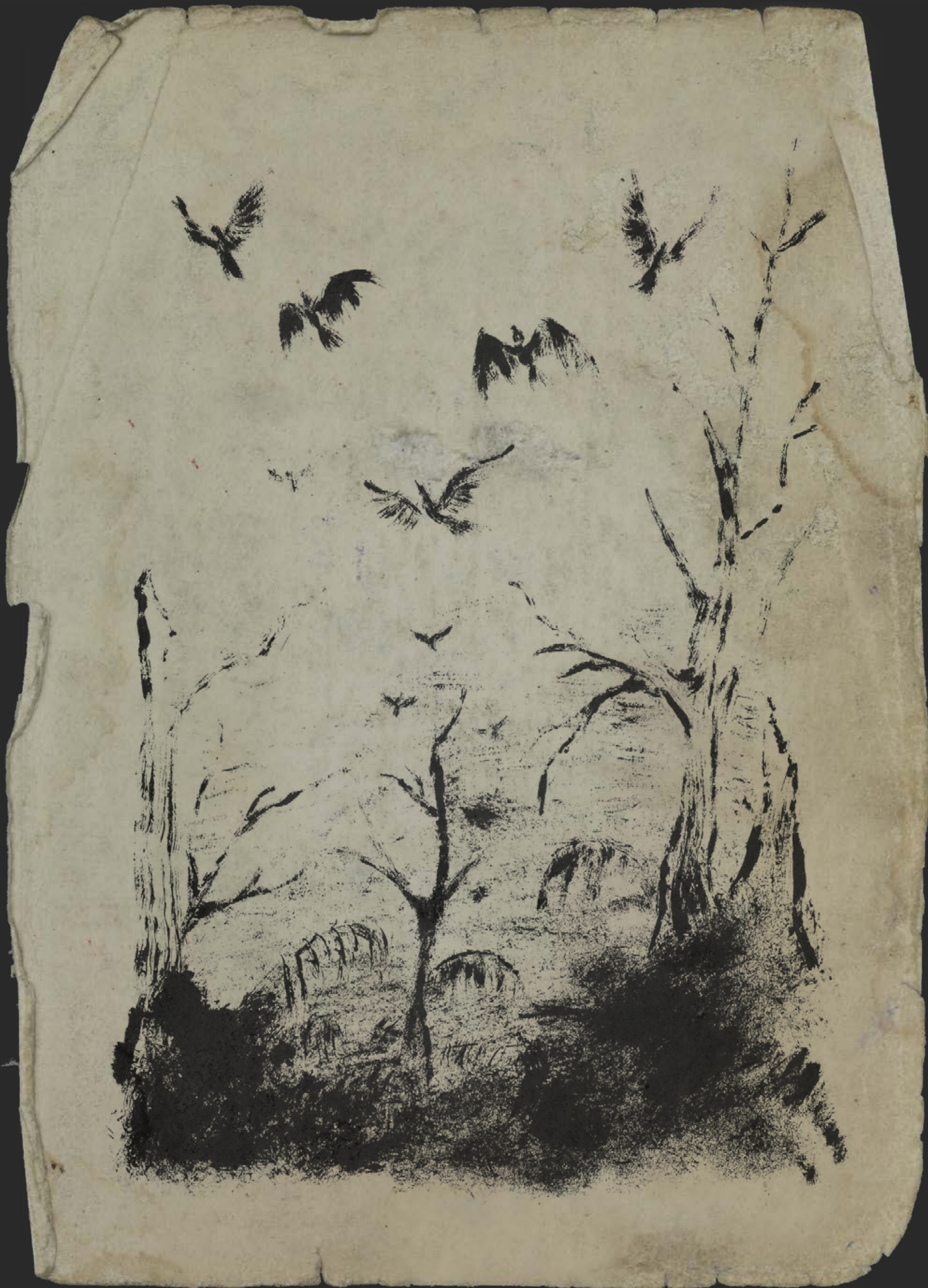
Full of bitterness, Veles was, and Mokosh did see that he began to turn away from her and that a great torment did fester within him. Then, he did show her the destruction that the people sowed upon the world, as they were forever young and strong like half-gods. And she felt distraught, too, as she did revere the beauty of man and woman, and she had not concluded how careless were their actions.

She became concerned, for she loved Praboh and his creation, alas, but so she also admired the wonders of Veles's work, and she felt sorry for his animals and plants.

And so she went to a place where a cave had collapsed, and a dead creek reached the verge of the Surface. She touched a pool, and the water, awakened by her fingers, did pour into the rocks, carving a crevice within them.

Mokosh summoned the Water of Life to herself so that after having given life to every creation, be it Veles's beasts and herbs or Praboh's humans, it would return to her goddess, to the Underworld, putting an end to the life on Earth.

And hence began Time, and death thus changed the flow  
of the River of Life, pushing it into the dark chasms of the  
Underworld.



## 19. *The Redemption of Souls*

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And fear fell upon all of creation, for all things became mortal. And the plants did wilt, animals waste, women's wombs wither, and men did turn to ash. Mokosh bound the springs which the life flowed from, and no more were things as they were in the Beginning.

Women and men were dying. The breath infused by Praboh did flee from them, and that last breath so longed for the life it tasted thanks to the Water that it wandered aimlessly around the world, wailing and calling out to the Heavens.

So Praboh created new animals, light as the air, for which the Skies were home, and he named them birds. And every breath that left a mortal body couldst mount a bird steed and fly to Praboh to join with him and fill him with memories. The people did call that breath a soul.



## 20. *Veles's Messengers*

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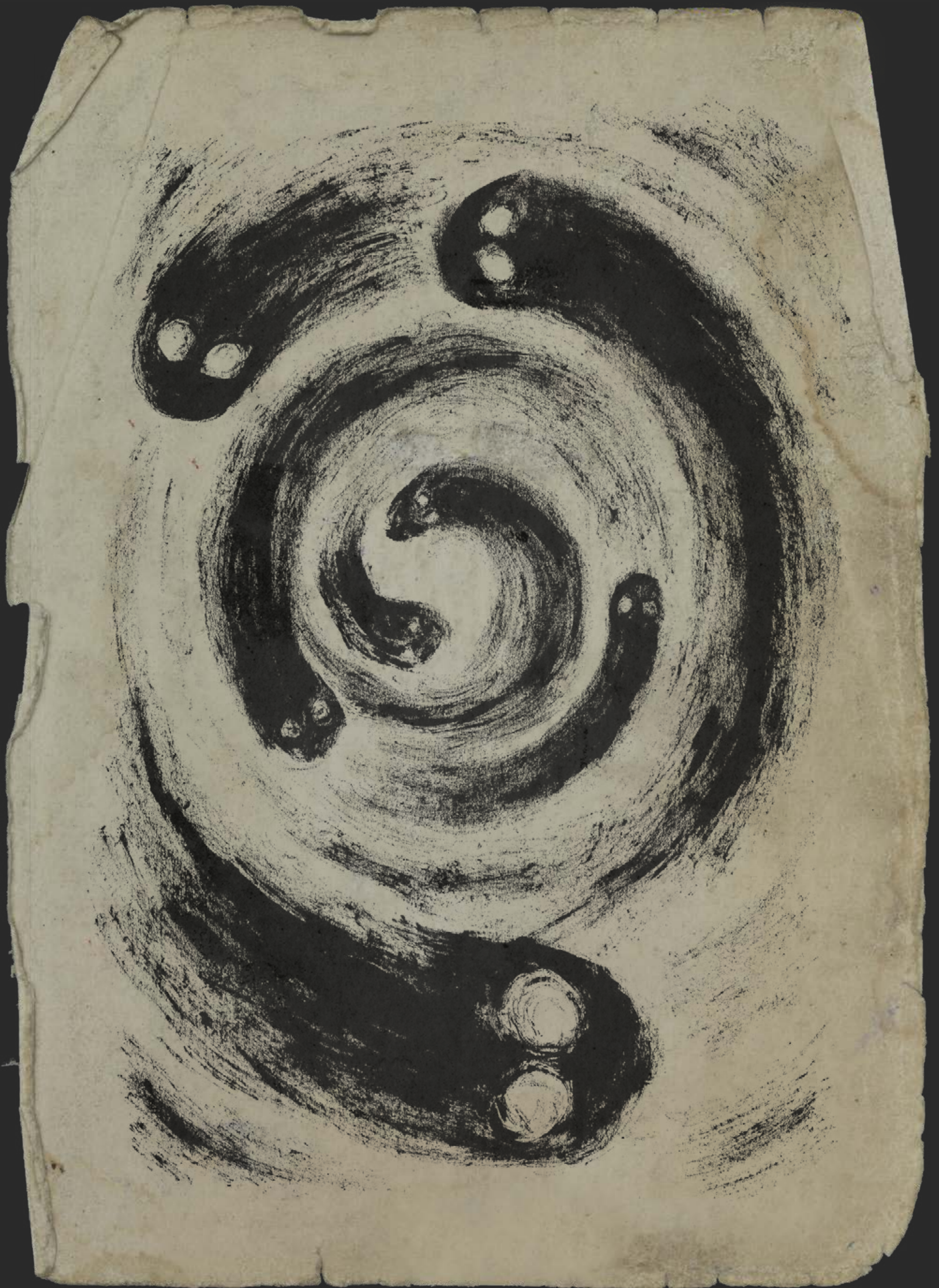
Veles did see the souls riding on the backs of birds, the emptiness in his land, the loneliness of Mokosh, and her longing gaze directed at the Surface.

And so he made an enemy for the birds, one connected to the Earth as they were connected to the Skies, as heavy as they were light and as grim as they were cheerful. Instead of a feathery down, he covered it with scales, instead of the ability to sing, he did order it to hiss, and instead of letting it fly wherever it chose, he took its limbs so that it couldst slither into every hole. And thus Veles appointed himself a messenger and called it a serpent.

And the serpents lurked for the human souls, ready to bite and strangle them, to kill their bird-steeds and swallow them whole. And when the serpent wouldst catch a human soul, it wouldst take it beneath the ground whence there was no means of escape.

'Twas not long before souls swarmed in the Underworld, where Veles was their master. They were to keep Mokosh company for eternity, until the end of the times.





## 21. *The Duality of Souls*

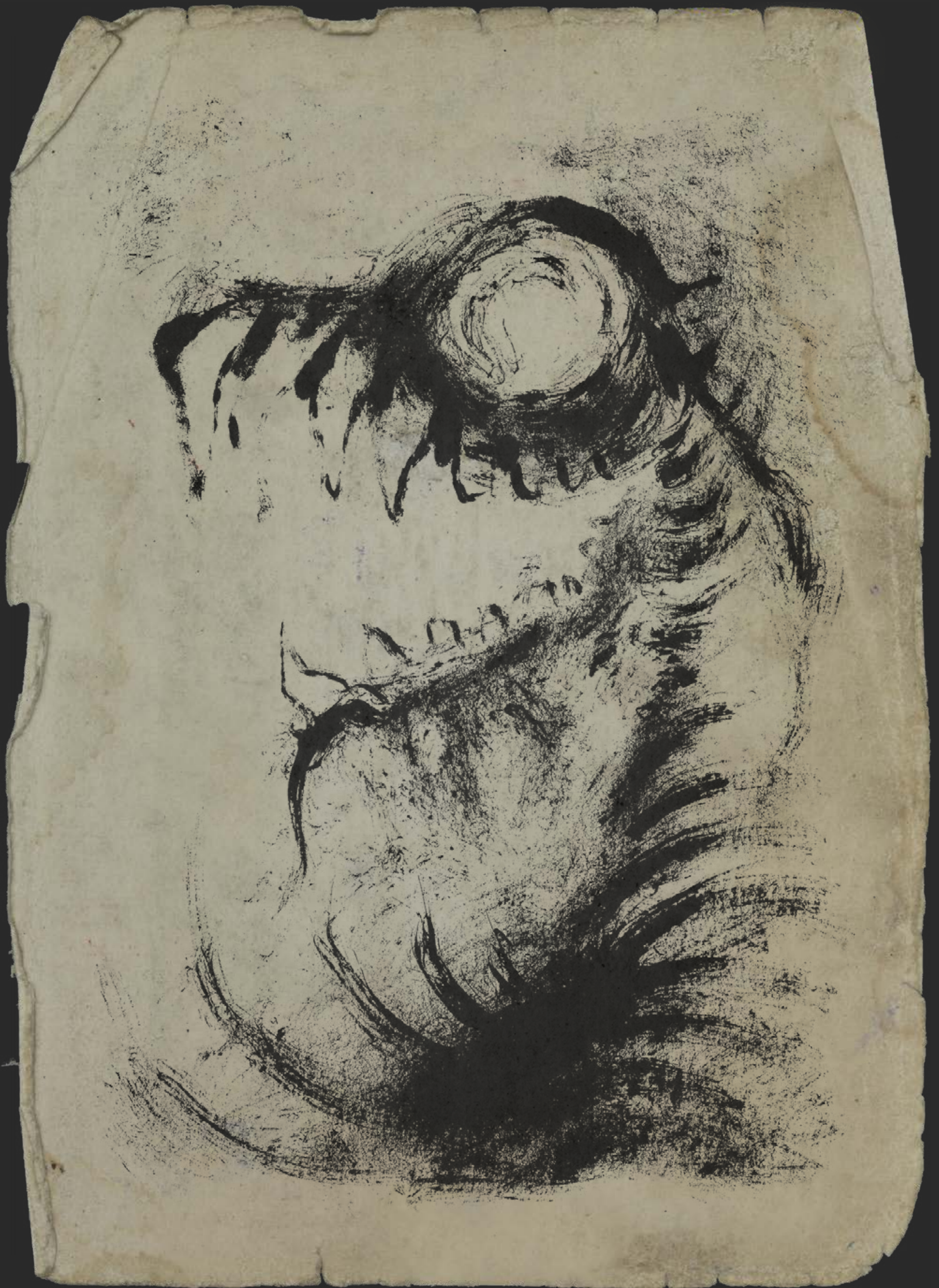
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The gift from Veles did most amaze Mokosh.

Some souls were beautiful, radiant as beams from the Sun, as light as the air, and as pristine as water from a spring. Memories contained in them brought joy to Mokosh when she touched them, and the feelings flowing from them filled her heart with bliss and warmth.

Yet, there were also other souls, weighed down by an indescribable burden, like a lump in the throat or a thorn in one's side. Mokosh avoided them, for she sensed their fear, sadness, and anger, all of which did poison thoughts and clog up lungs.

Veles, too, did learn about this difference, and he understood that disturbed souls did suck the life out and replace it with venom. So he did catch those souls and crammed them into shells sewn from the remains of failed creatures. 'Twas a most horrid sight and horrid, too, were the thoughts of the souls imprisoned in those miscreated shapes. Hence he did call them Horrors, and they were sent to the Surface in order to deal with the humans.



## 22. *The Age of Misery*

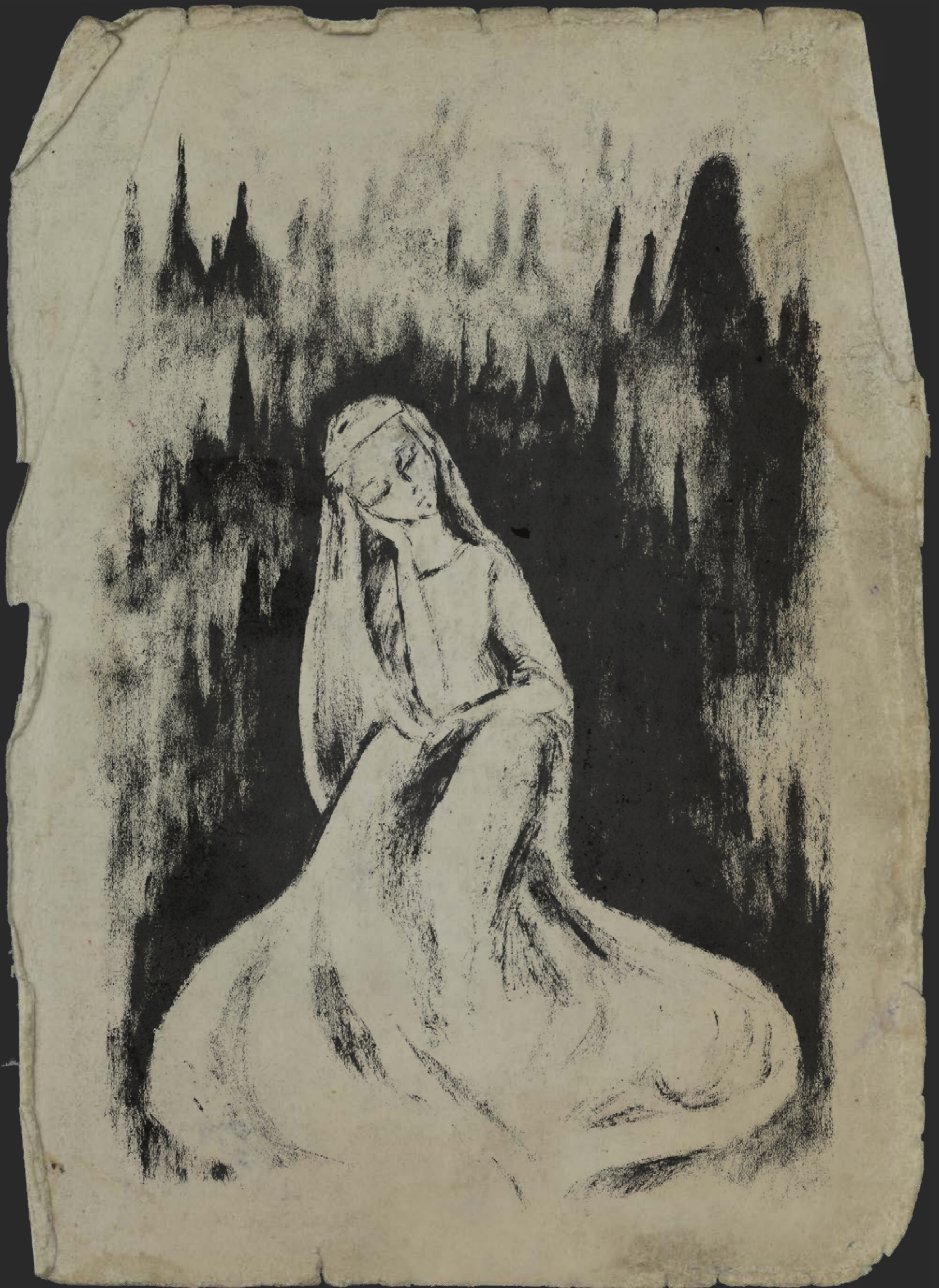
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O', the dread! O', the misery! Veles did unleash the first Horror from the Underworld, did open the Earth's very bowels and spat from it all things rotten, and the vermin did eat through the souls of the humans!

The sludge that did muddy the once clear Water of Life came from Veles and was born out of false divinity. It did taint human hearts and minds, did darken their memories, and did spoil their feelings with anguish.

And from all those things did Veles spawn his nightmarish army. Made real were agitation and wickedness, greed and passion, pride and contempt, whilst all things human and born from Air were hated.

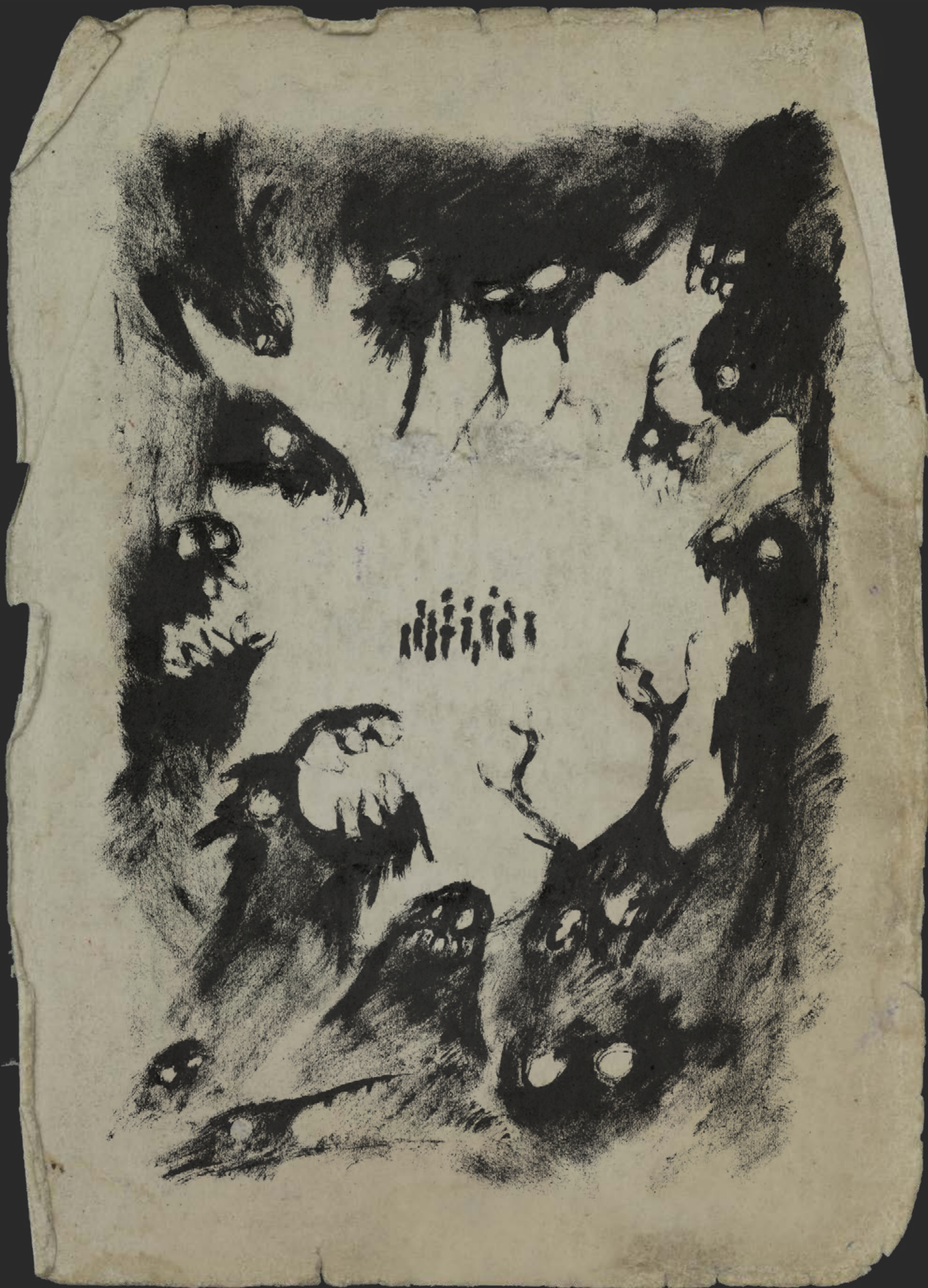
Both great and merciless was Veles's might, but even greater still were the disdain and humiliation he did feel when the humans did trample his creation and when his loved one was gazing above. So, Veles did not hesitate to unleash the Horrors against the humans, thus did begin the Age of Misery.



## 23. *Sorrowful Mokosh*

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Mokosh did feel sorrow for Veles for his lonely and dreary being, as she understood that he craved the light, the warmth, and the love, even though he was destined to ne'er receive them. She saw his passion and strength, the might of his creation, the things he erected upon the Surface, and the miracles he did fill his Underworld with. Howe'er, she did fear, also, the envy within him, his untamed power, and insatiable desires. And when she did see the Horrors, the most vile spawn of his grim nature, her fear grew a hundred-fold: fear for her and fear for the world, with which she was connected by divine compassion. But what was she to do! She did want to tear the defiled souls asunder, but to commit them to the void would be most vile. For the filth that swelled within them was not their fault, as 'twas born from the seed of divine envy and passion. Mokosh was merciful, compassionate, patient, and gracious. Thus, different was the fate she desired to offer to these souls.



## 24. *The False Promise*

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Thus, Mokosh did visit Veles and did confront him on the matter of the Horrors.

Demanded she that Veles did restrain his most wretched hounds and order them to cease attacking innocents, to cease all things except guard nature. He was to promise that if any of the Horrors shalt fall, having fulfilled its task, by the power of Veles, it shalt be released from its most grim service and cleansed of all filth, that Veles shalt accept it into his realm, and that it shalt never again be put into a filthy shell.

And Veles did agree, much to Mokosh's relief. Howe'er, he did not reveal unto her that his power over the Horrors was frail, and the promises given did resemble a slippery rope harnessing a great beast – for there was too much of Air and Water in them and too little Earth. What he did put in motion he couldst not stop – and that was the secret of the Age of Misery.



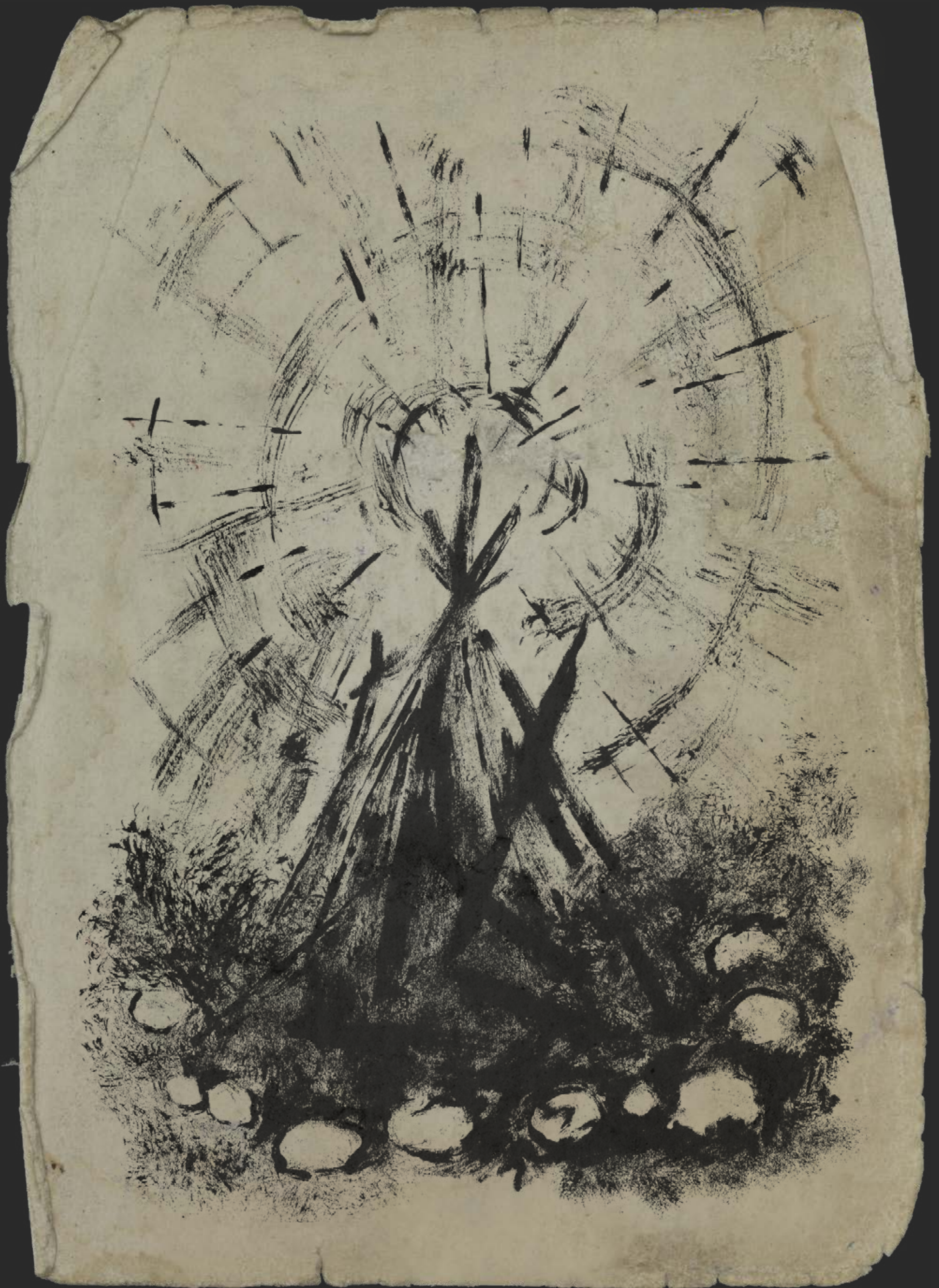


## 25. *Trepidation and Powerlessness*

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The Horrors are most dreadful creatures, neither humans nor beast, although they couldst resemble both at times. There are big ones and small. Some may be ugly as sin whilst others as charming as one's deepest desire. There are those that sit quietly and avoid humans, and those that do trail the scent of humans, as wouldst a wolf, until they get to strangle one of them. There are also others that revel in making their victims suffer slowly, tearing them apart as would a crow whilst they still yet breathe.

So families did need to gather together, to live and farm in groups and watch over one another. Carelessness was forgotten, and everyone henceforth did live in fear. All did have to know their place, to listen their chief, and to worship his party, for without, not a one of them would be spared the Horrors. Bleak was the warriors' fame, for when a Horror did come towards the gathering, the party wouldst bravely fight the enemy whilst facing certain death, for they did focus solely upon allowing the rest of the tribe a safe escape.



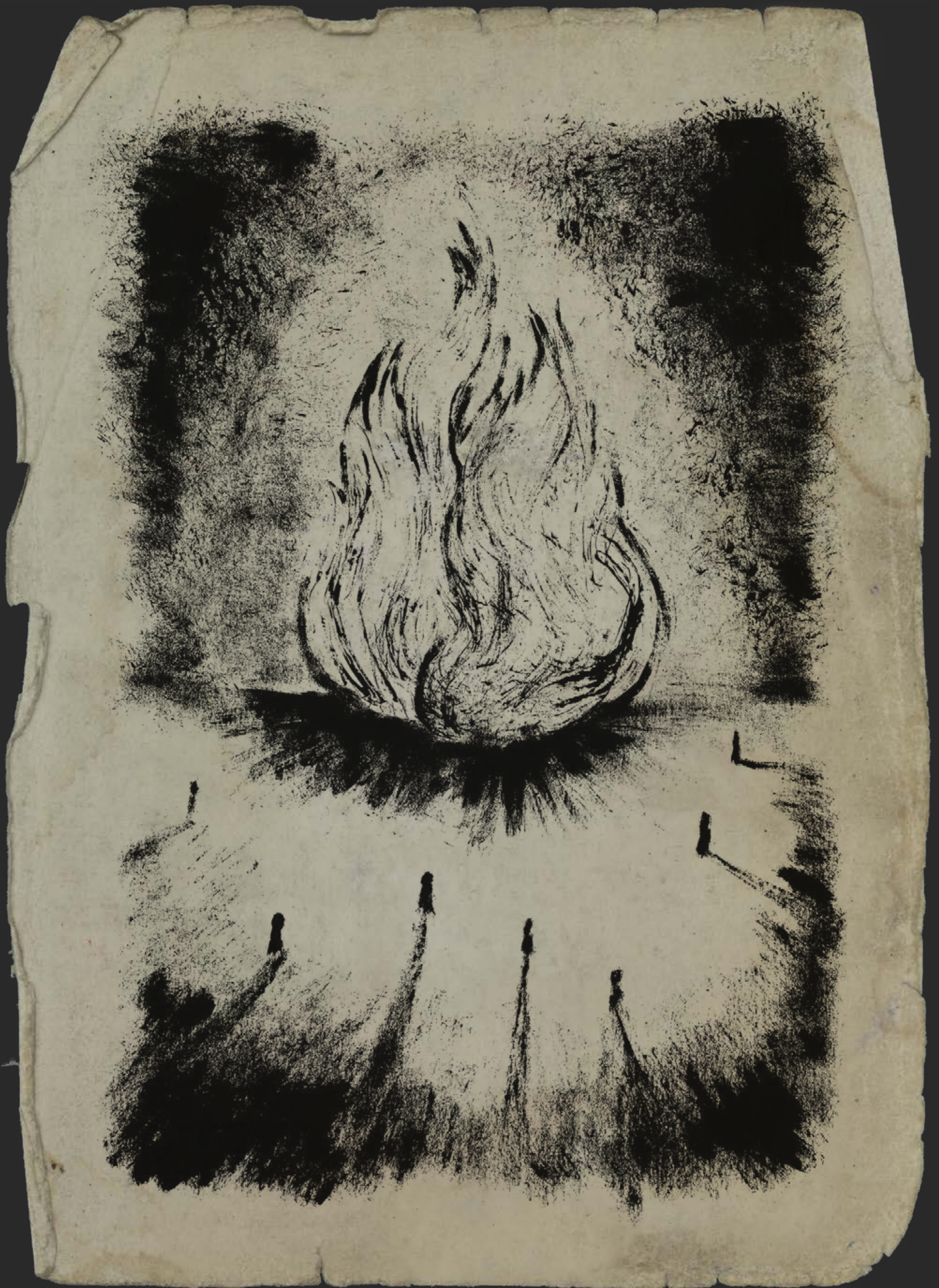
## 26. *The Descent of the Sun*

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Truly, the Age of Misery did begin most terribly. Humans were falling, stricken by the foul power of the Horrors, they did gather in droves like timid game, and helpless they were like a lost child facing a pack of wolves.

A sight most sorrowful for the eyes it must have been: a most shocking tableau depicting the humans' pitiful downfall and the consequent rise of the Horrors' loathsome rule. Daboh did watch all this from above, the heavenly guardian and the Great Benefactor, warm and radiant like a kiss of happiness incarnated, strong and invincible like the Sun in the Sky, which he is.

Thus did Daboh step down to the Earth, amongst the humans, and gathered them around him. He did order them to collect wood and to pile it upward and then to encircle it with stones. No one did understand what the purpose of this folly was, but they did listen to their god, for he was great and benevolent.



## 27. *The Divine Heart*

---

They did watch their radiant deity in both awe and elation. For beautiful was Daboh, and satiating was his power, like a golden light that did come through the thicket of a forest. But then every one of them let out a great scream of terror! For Daboh did tear a half of his fiery heart out from within himself and toss it upon the pile of wood before him, and when the pile did catch fire, he thus called it a bonfire. Then, brightness and heat did commence, and strength did pour into the hearts of all humans. Praised be Daboh, who gifted humans with fire!

The humans did rejoice, amazed, but the deity's gift 'twas not meant for play nor satisfying curiosity. He did lead the people to the marshlands and start poking a stick into the moist soil until he hit a spot as hard as a bone hidden beneath the tender flesh. And Daboh did order the humans to retrieve this Bone of the Earth from the soil, and he did call it iron. And he did tell them to cast it into the fire, as it will become their weapon against the Horrors: a weapon torn from the soil and forged in the flame.



## 28. *Earth's Bone*

---

For iron is the Bone of the Earth, and we do tear it from the soft marshes that are rich as fat beneath the skin of the Earth.

But the Earth does not give up its bones freely; whoe'er goes into the marshlands must beware! Many have already been dragged into the bog, and many have lost their senses in its fumes.

There is, howe'er, one kind creature which does call the marshes its domain. 'Tis called a Bludnik, and some worship it as a deity, whilst others call it a Horror. No person knows which is truth, but whosoe'er does look for ore shalt be on guard against it.

People say it does resemble a giant horned beetle and that it does hover over the marshes like a will-o'-the-wisp. Give it an offering, and it will lead thou to iron ore deposits; offend it, and it will lead thou astray and to thine demise.

For nothing good is given for free in this life.





## 29. *Divine Blades*

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After collecting the bones, thou must first build a funnel in clay and grass. Once dried, a fire, made with wood and the collected Bones of the Earth, must be lighted within it. After the Bones catch fire, all the filth shalt be burned, and only the most precious core shall remain. It must be thence melted down in a bowl until it turns to hot blood. The blood must then be poured into a clay cast prepared beforehand. Once the cast sets, then it must be broken apart, and what has emerged, hammered in the fire to form a blade.

People once said that if a blade is to be good not only for the Horrors but for the arm that holds it as well, then a warrior should stride to the forest and summon a Kudlak. If it shalt take a liking to the warrior, it shalt appear in the skin of a wolf, a bear, or a wisent to test him. If he does strikes down the beast, it is a sign of the divine anointment. But, if Kudlak does not show itself or mauls the warrior, the blade shalt be given to a mightier one.

So it once was. Now, howe'er, only the stronger Horrors remain, and to beat even but one of them couldst be a most unfeasible task to an entire party of warriors. Ne'ertheless, Kudlak's blessing is still worth having.



## 30. *The Introduction of Darkness*

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Praised be Daboh!

Tremendous was his sacrifice for humanity. When, having left the Fire on the Surface, he did return to the Skies to illuminate the human paths as the Sun, and alas, he had but only one half of his strength remaining. Since then, the Sun, having bathed the world in its light, must take rest, sleep, and regain its power. And once the Sun has set, tired of its work, darkness shalt take over and then begins the Night: a time most dreadful, alien, and threatening for humans, for no divine guardian is there to watch over them during this period.

And only Fire, torn from the divine chest and fed so with sticks and grease, shalt illuminate the darkness for humans and thus lessen their fear of the Night. So, humans did begin to worship it, as they worshipped the Sun in the daytime. And then, they did start praising the Fire during the day, too, as it was powerful and good, hot and alluring.

Praised be Daboh! Praised be his heart!



## 31. *The Capriciousness of Fire*

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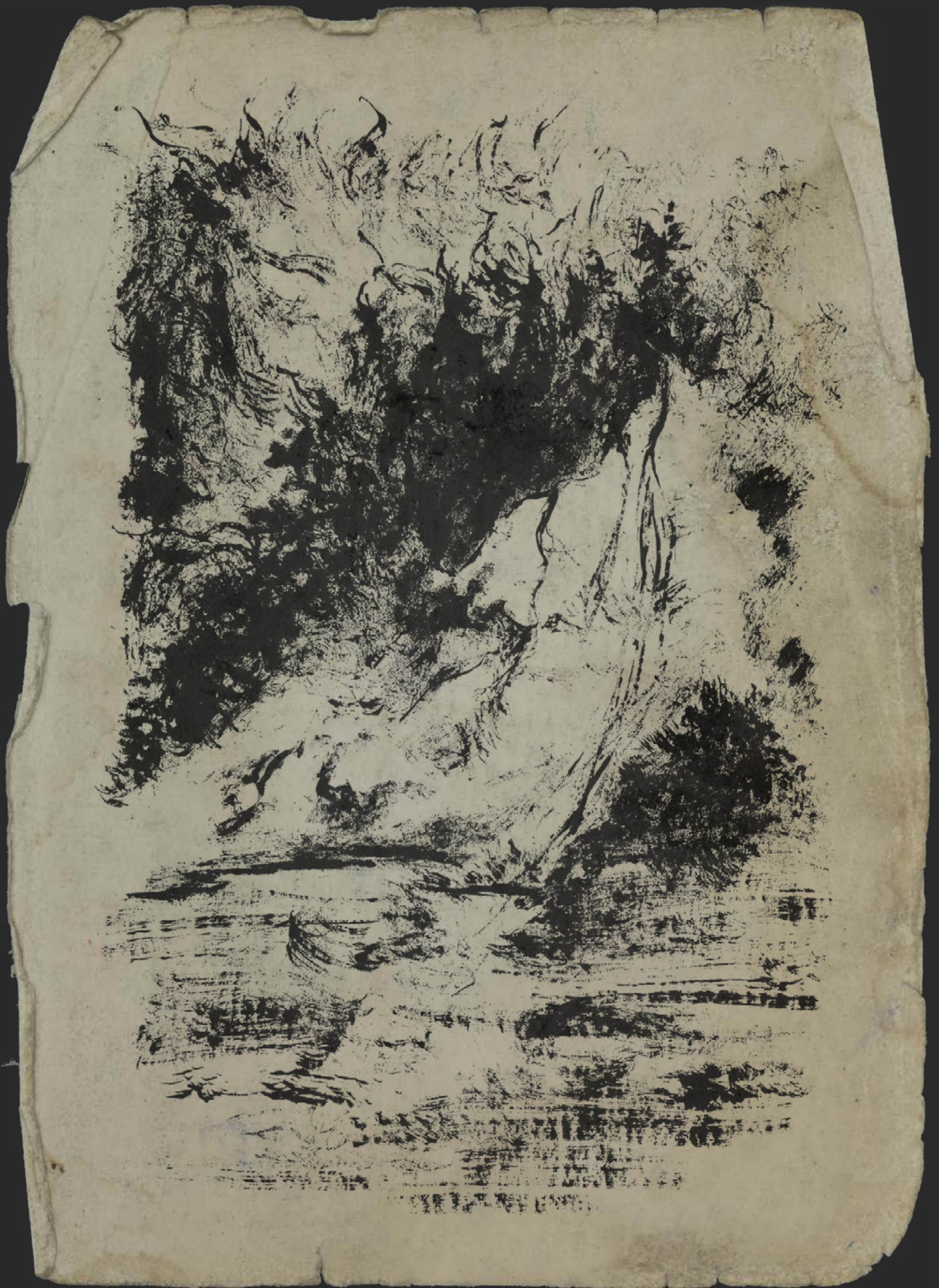
Fire is a divine heart, brave and strong, good and capricious, destructive yet possessing the power to create. Hence, the Horrors are not fond of it, for the flames are stronger than their foulness.

Yet, though Fire is beautiful and good, it is far from perfection, as it came from but a half of the divine heart and not the whole of it.

Fire still requires sustenance, and it must be fed with careful thought. For if Fire shalt be thrown at a Horror, it couldst be that not only foulness but the whole land shalt burn as well: the settlement couldst be destroyed, game wouldst become scared to places afar, and the crops shalt become naught but ash. For the more Fire gets fed, the bigger it shalt grow, and the fiercer its hunger does become.

One must use the divine gift sensibly and beware of greed! Fire's place is on the torches and in the bonfires, used to keep all the filth at bay and to illuminate the roads after dusk. And if one does not have the courage in the stead of growing a bigger flame, one shouldst beg a Licho for mercy,

both for protection against bad weather and to keep one safe  
from mishaps.





## 32. *Conflagration*

---

Fire did eat sticks and grease, and it did eat all things born from the Earth and Veles's power. What a terrible foe it was for the creations of Veles! Great and good was the gift of Fire: praised be Daboh for it!

Where the spark was once lit, there now bowed plants and game fled. For Fire wouldst consume all things, leaving naught but ash, and destroying the magic of Veles. And humans were throwing the Bones, called iron, taken from within the bowels of the Earth, into the blazing embrace as taught to them by Daboh, the divine blacksmith. Men did make arrowheads from it, to the terror of the animals, and women did wear the iron on their bodies in praise of Daboh.

Veles did see all of that from his underground lair, and, at first, Fire and its ravages did scare him. Yet, cunning and grim a deity as Veles be, and whatever he did touch wouldst turn to filth and rot. O', woe betide those who wouldst listen to his whispers! O, woe betide anyone who shalt stand in his way!



## 33. *Conspiracy*

---

Long had Veles watched Fire and did wonder how he couldst make a stand against it and save his creation from the conflagration. For all the animals and plants hailed to humans now, who carried a flaming torch, and even the Horrors did shudder at the sight of Fire, reluctant to fight the heart of Daboh. No longer were humans but defenceless prey since they now also armed themselves with iron claws. Thus did many of the Horrors restrain their cravings for a hunt.

There were but two things that the Fire couldst not conquer: the rock and the river; the heart of the Earth and the blood of the Water. And so, one Night, when tired Mokosh did soundly sleep, Veles crept beneath the cover of darkness and stole away the blood that slowly drained from her body – which also drains from every woman's body so that the flow of life couldst continue.



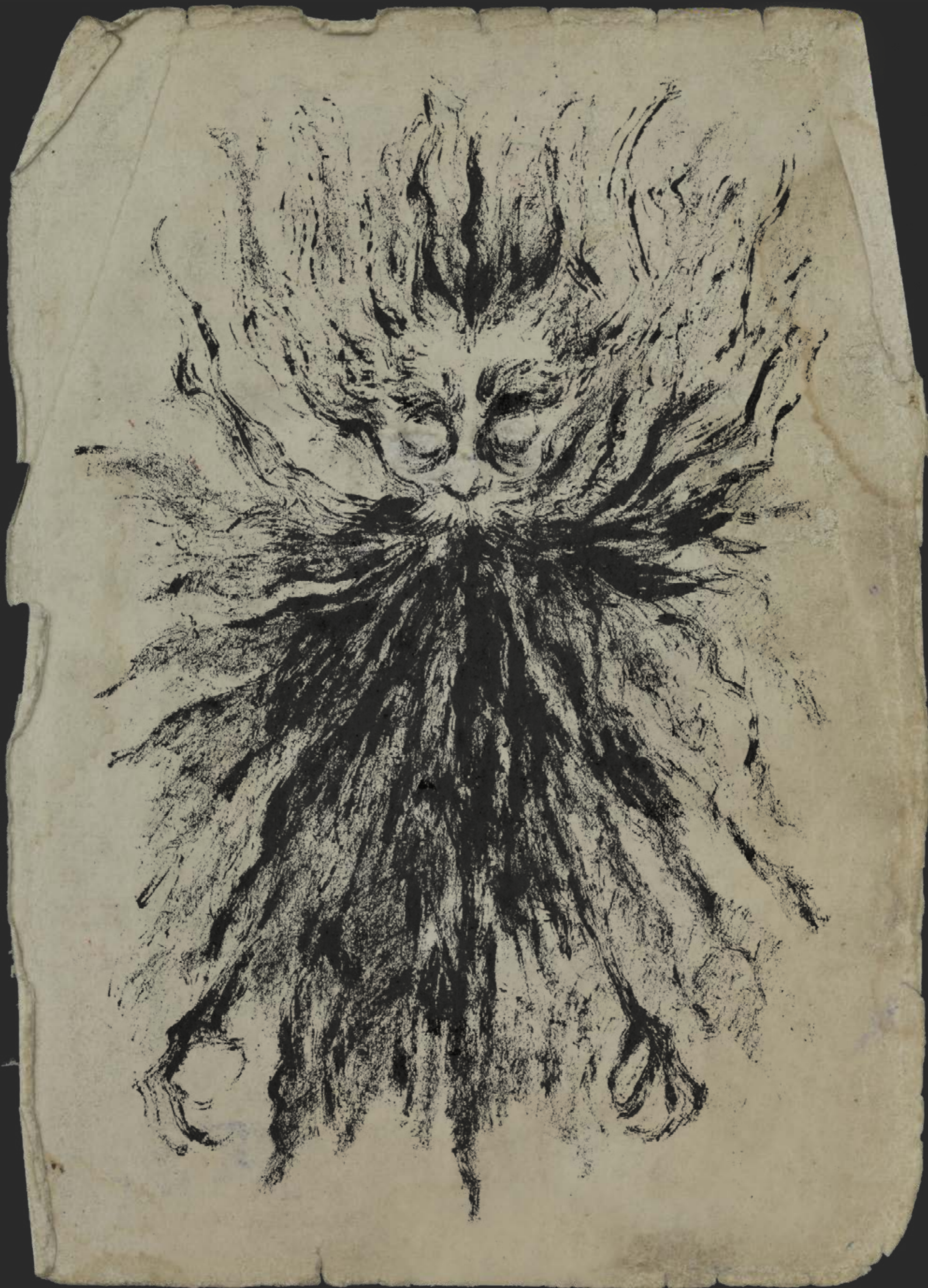
## 34. *The Prince of the Underworld*

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Mokosh's blood glimmered when Veles did enchant it in secret, for his power was stolen from the Skies, which, before the Beginning, was one with the Water.

And Veles did take the crystal-clear blood of Mokosh and did pour it into the most perfect, most horrifying shape he did ever create. Howe'er, he did not desire to animate it with the power of the Air, for a breath of the Skies only fed Fire and did make it stronger. Hence, Veles did require a different power.

Just as Daboh tore a part from his fiery heart to save the humans, so did Veles tear a fragment from his very own in the name of all humans' demise. 'Twas a rock, the hardest and darkest of any in the world, one made with the most wicked of thoughts and the heaviest passion. 'Twas a source of power and will for Veles's most monstrous creation, one which did laugh at the fire and was named Žmij: a prince amongst the serpents and the Horrors, and the enemy of humans.



## 35. *Tempting Fire*

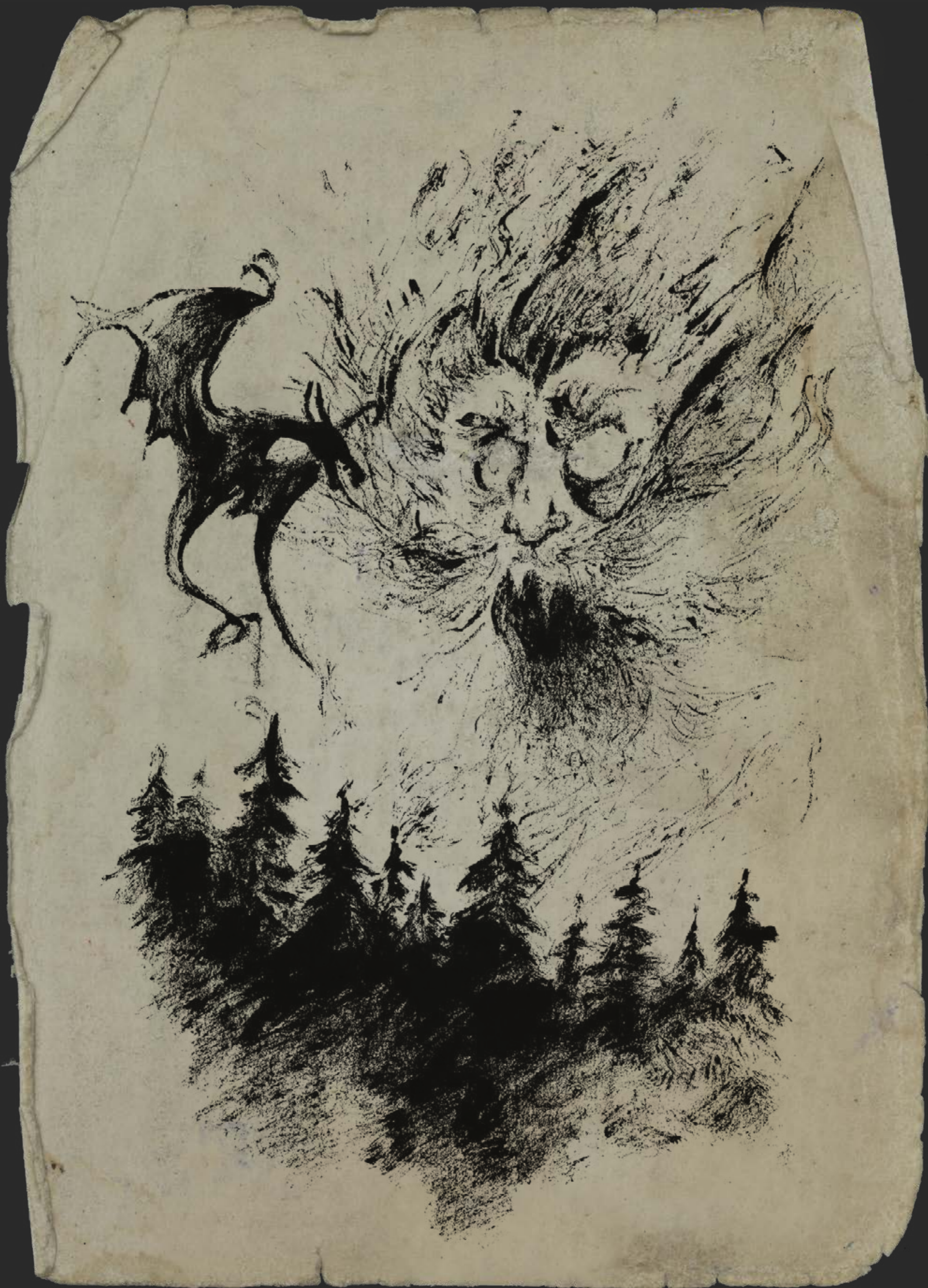
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Whoever saw Žmij did stop as though they did turn to stone and did lose their soul from sheer terror!

Humans then set their Fire against Žmij and did surround him with a blazing circle. But the fiery tongues licked Žmij's scales in vain. Veles's general, The Serpent Prince, put out the fire with but one shake of his tail that blew at the torches as the wind blows at reddened leaves in the autumn.

O' how great was Fire's defeat! His humiliation and fury! Veles did see his greed and passion, for he was familiar with both and knew what to feed to them. So, he visited Fire and did start to whisper unto it. He did tell it of the taste of power, the smell of victory, and the most sweet melody of dread and worship. And Fire did listen and did turn red in excitement, whilst fever did heat him as a hen heats the chicks nestled in their eggs.

But 'twas not a hen that was sitting on the egg! 'Twas the Lord of the Underworld, the Father of the Žmij, and so when the shell broke, a deity of madness and conflict did emerge, and his name was Svarog.





## 36. *Fire Stained*

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O', how horrible is the Age of Misery! The age of blood and madness, of conflagration and darkness! Horrible is this time of Horrors, and how dreadful are the roads that swarm with snakes, and the foul shadow of their Prince that so fills the hearts with fear!

The only hope does lie in Daboh, in the Sun that shines high above and shows the safe paths, for the shadow runs from it and awaits the coming of the Night.

Doomed will be the ones who joined with Svarog in madness, who jumped in the Fire and worship it! Tainted it is with the magic of Veles, and dependent on it: for what wouldst it eat if not the grease and branches made by Veles? O', how great was the mistake of the good Daboh! The weapon he did craft with his own heart grew unruly and did take a taste for its power.

How couldst Svarog stand against Veles, the very one to feed him and let him grow? How couldst he protect us from the Žmij, who does choke him like the snake chokes the chick?

Woe betide anyone who kneels before the Fire, blinded by its false light!



## 37. *The Burning Procession*

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Treacherous is the god and all traitors who worship him!

Fire couldst not resist the temptation of Veles's promise and did surrender to his threats, and those who were greedy and without valour did join the scorching procession. How couldst any person who brands themselves so in the name of a mad god be sane? Is there valour in anyone who raids the other tribes?

The fever did make them mad, but they did not deserve pity! Their god, Svarog, listened to the whispers of Veles and did swear to murder and rob anyone who wouldst not kneel before the Fire and the Earth just to be protected from the Horrors and the Žmij.

Therefore, all evil turned against those who worshipped the True Gods, and the minds of righteous men were being poisoned with madness.

They shouted these words:

Woe to us, woe to us! The Fire grows, being fed by the sacrifices! We, too, should make them to feed the hunger

of our gods! Offerings! Offerings! Strangle to bring breath  
back to Praboh! Drown to restore strength to Mokosh! Strike  
with your fists in the name of Perun! And spill blood for  
Daboh as he did tear out his own heart for us!



## 38. *Svarog's Blasphemies*

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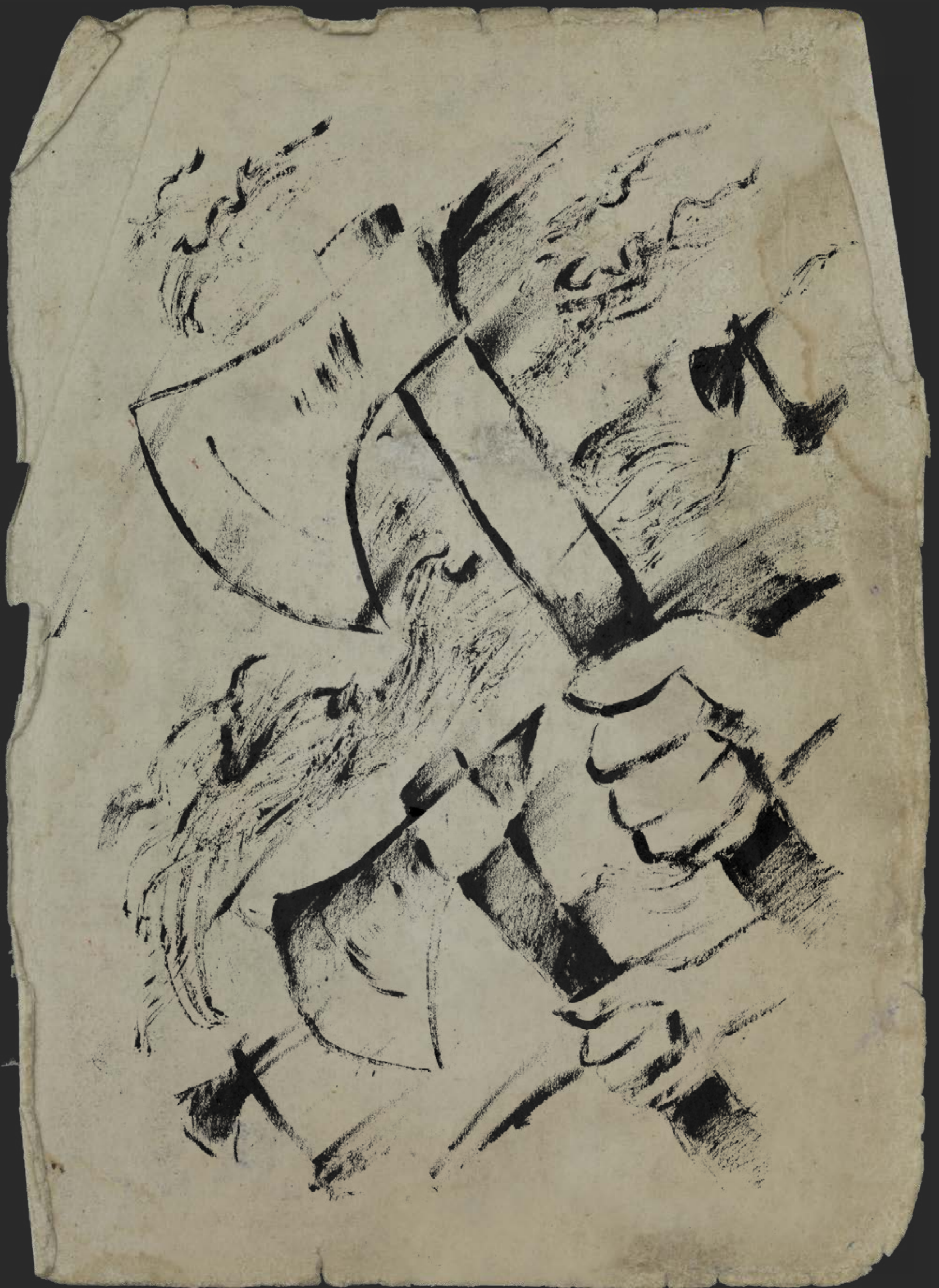
Lo, let the words of the worshippers' of the Fire priest testify to their madness! For these which I, Ga'al, overheard when I did sneak to the vicinity of their gord.

He did say:

What are the gods? And what are men? Some are the creators of the worlds, whilst the others – their flock! So are people the flock of the gods, as men are gods to the animals? For do they not breed them for their own gain and rule over them in life and in death?

Yet, more powerful than animals are men! They know how to bargain with the gods, how to outwit them and make them fear. For behold, the man did take hold of the flames, raise them from the stones, and kill it with water. 'Twas man who made Fire a god, turned him against those who made men their flock, and made him join with those who gave the men game, plants, and springs of water. Here is man! Carrying a flaming torch, using it to burn new paths, and to devour enemies!

Praise man! Praise the Fire!



## 39. *Fire's Aliment*

---

Terrible were the words of Svarog's priest, and his hatred did fill me with fear when I had listened to him so disguised amongst his most devoted followers. He did say:

Full of fear are the other tribes! They do bow to the Old Gods like prey bowing to their hunter. They bow to Praboh, who is translucent as the air and has abandoned the world; to distant Daboh, who disappears in the Night when the prayers fall silent; to Veles, who lies in wait for the souls to feast on them.

Only the ones who feed the Fire and join it are without blemish! Here are the warriors, conquerors, and rulers who do decide their own fate. Ours is the Fire, the New God: and he is hot and generous! He gave us the bonfire, so we wouldst not starve! He gave us the clay pots so we couldst gather goods! He gave us the eternal light, so the Night couldst not defeat us!

Let the cowards hunt in the woods like beasts, let them nibble the grass like goats, let them keep pigs amongst their children! While we shalt rule them and make a living from their crops and hauls! They shalt build gords for us and their women shalt bear children for us.





## 40. *The Horrible Spawn*

---

O', how much disdain there was in the Fire's anointed! And his pride was indescribable. Judge his words for yourselves: The biggest cowards of them all are the worshippers of Veles. For they live in constant dread until it does make them deranged! Some even be too scared to dare build huts from the fallen branches so as to not anger the Underworld One, and they eat only what they find on the ground. Nor do they do speak much to become more like Veles's beasties: and for the same reason, they only wear raw hides. In their madness – and they do call us the madmen! – they fornicate with the Horrors! Their women, therefore, offered as sacrifice, return with child. And then they do give birth to foul crossbreeds called Monsters. They are as detestable as they are useless, but Svarog promised Veles not to slay them. Oh! How Veles must rejoice over the defilement of Praboh's creations! He does keep his distance from of us, howe'er, since we are the wielders of the Fire: the makers of Svarog.



## 41. *The Lord of Night*

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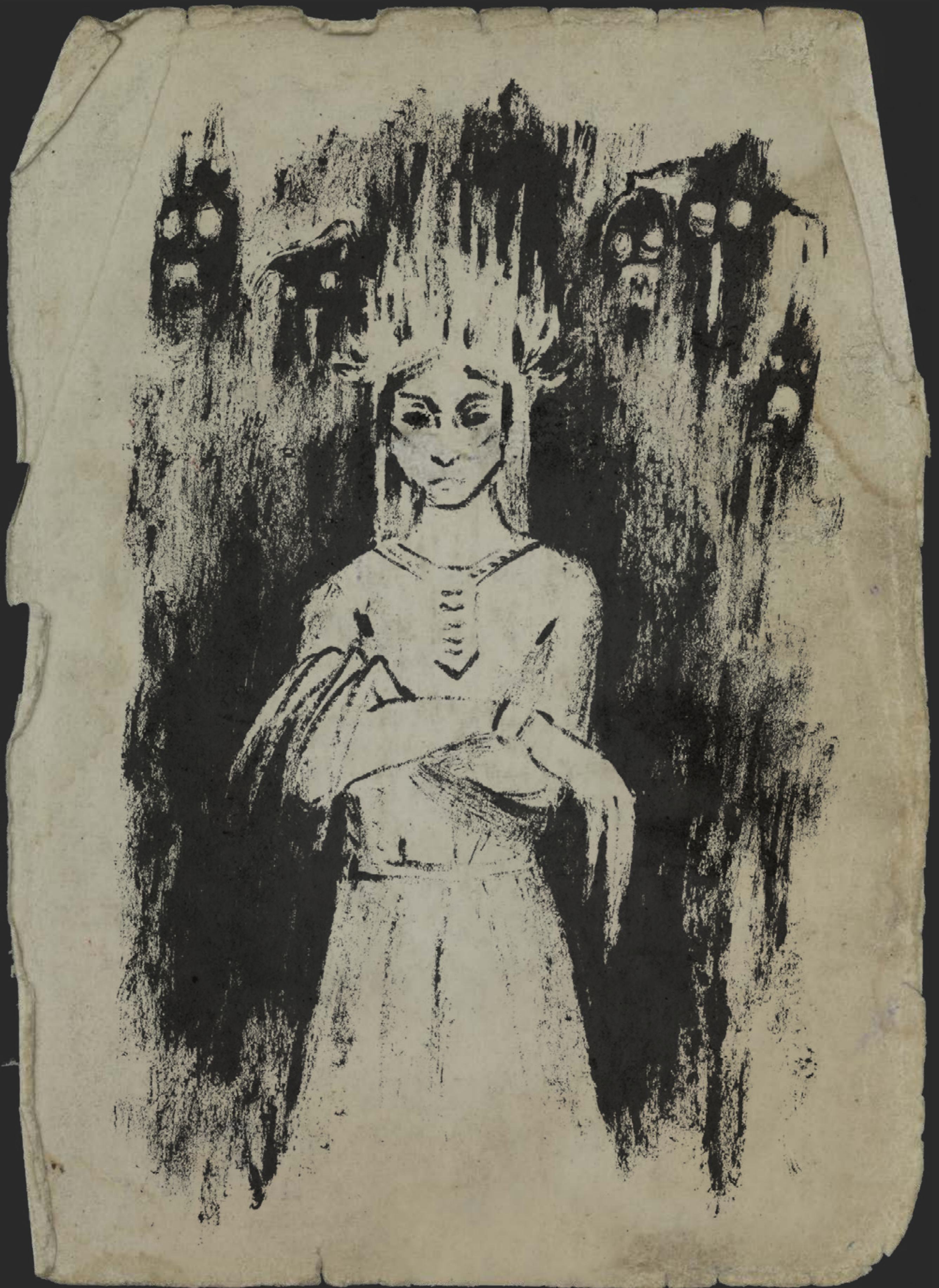
I have listened like a calf covered in leaves amongst wolves that did catch a scent. And my fear was growing! For there was no mercy in any word of the priest:

People fear everything. They fear Veles, they fear the Horrors, they fear the Monstrosities, they fear the darkness. And more! They fear hunger, cold, and death! There are even some who fear even their own shadow!

As Svarog can exist with thanks to our worship of the Fire, with thanks to the fear of the degraded tribes, so did arise the Lord of Night: Monster Whisperer and General of Horrors! And his name is Chors! Chors, like the hoarse breath which he shalt squeeze from your chest!

He is young and cruel, and just as his companions, he hates people. He hides during the day, when the Sun is high, but in the time of Night, when darkness comes, he does emerge in all his ghoulishness and does rule as he pleases.

Whosoe'er stands in his path shalt not live to see the dawn of the Sun!



## 42. *The Horrors'* *Whisperer*

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In those days, I was like a field mouse that did prowl the grass beneath the watchful falcon's wings. And when the time did come to escape from the scorching gazes of Svarog's worshippers, as returned along my path, the words of the priest did come back to me like an echo:

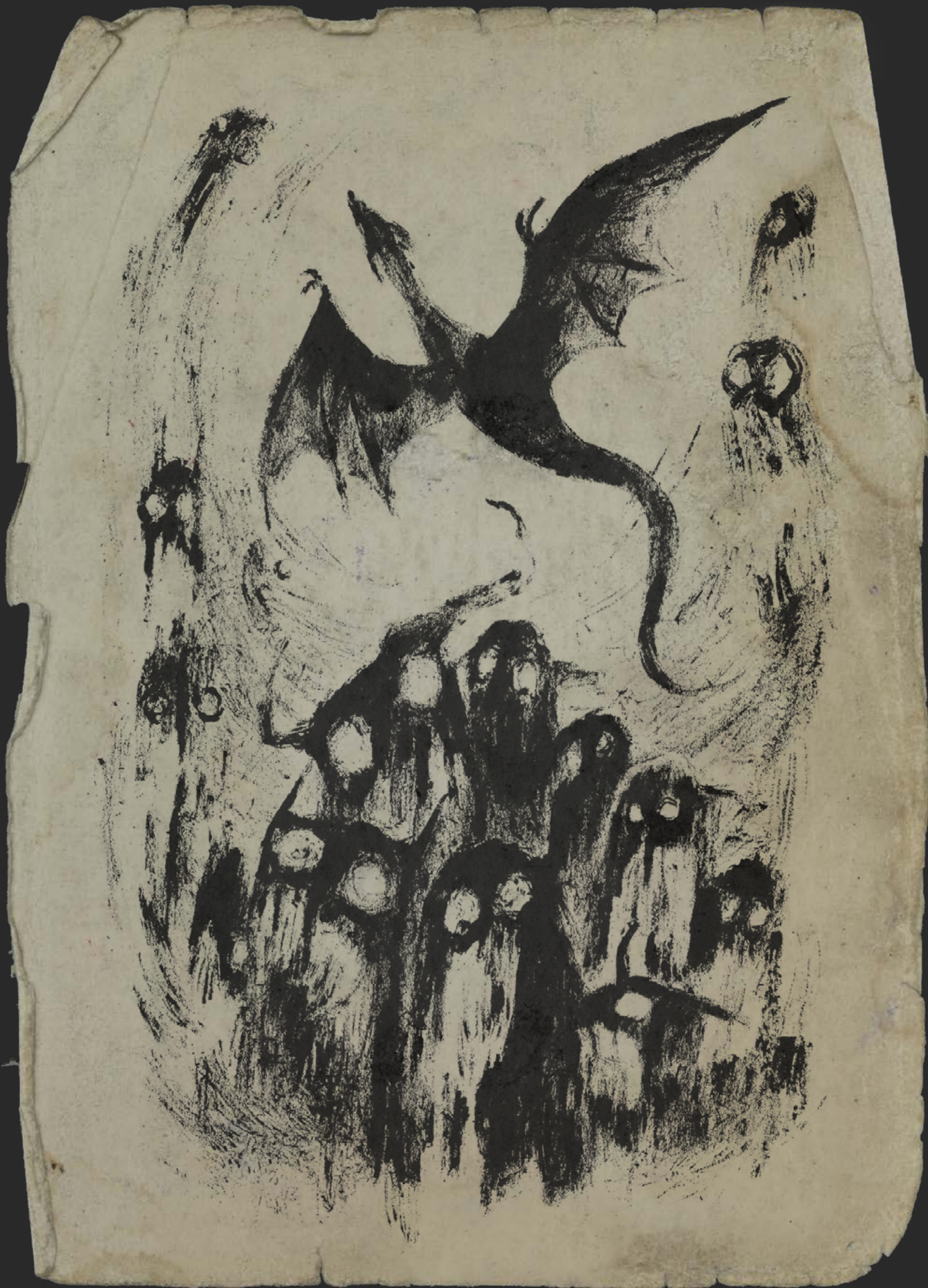
Weak are the gods of the cattle tribes! And weak are their worshippers! Their fear is bigger than their faith, and their moans louder than their prayers! And out of their fear and moans, Chors was born.

When the sunshine did fall beneath the ground, Chors does steal the last beams and wreathes a crown from them for himself. He does use its shine to lure all Nightly creatures, with the Horrors and Monsters amongst them. And he does lead them against the men! To feed them with more dread like it was the most sweet nectar.

Beautiful and terrifying he is, as pale as death and as grim as night; he has two faces like the Moon can be full and new. And great is his charm: he does attract the souls to himself

like moths and does lead them to their downfall. Do not be  
fooled by his shine!

This is the kind of god he is, made from the human's fear  
and mingling with the Monsters!





## 43. *The Horrors' Rebellion*

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In the name of Dolya, I shall continue to write this Chronicle, much the same as the great and honourable Ga'al did before me.

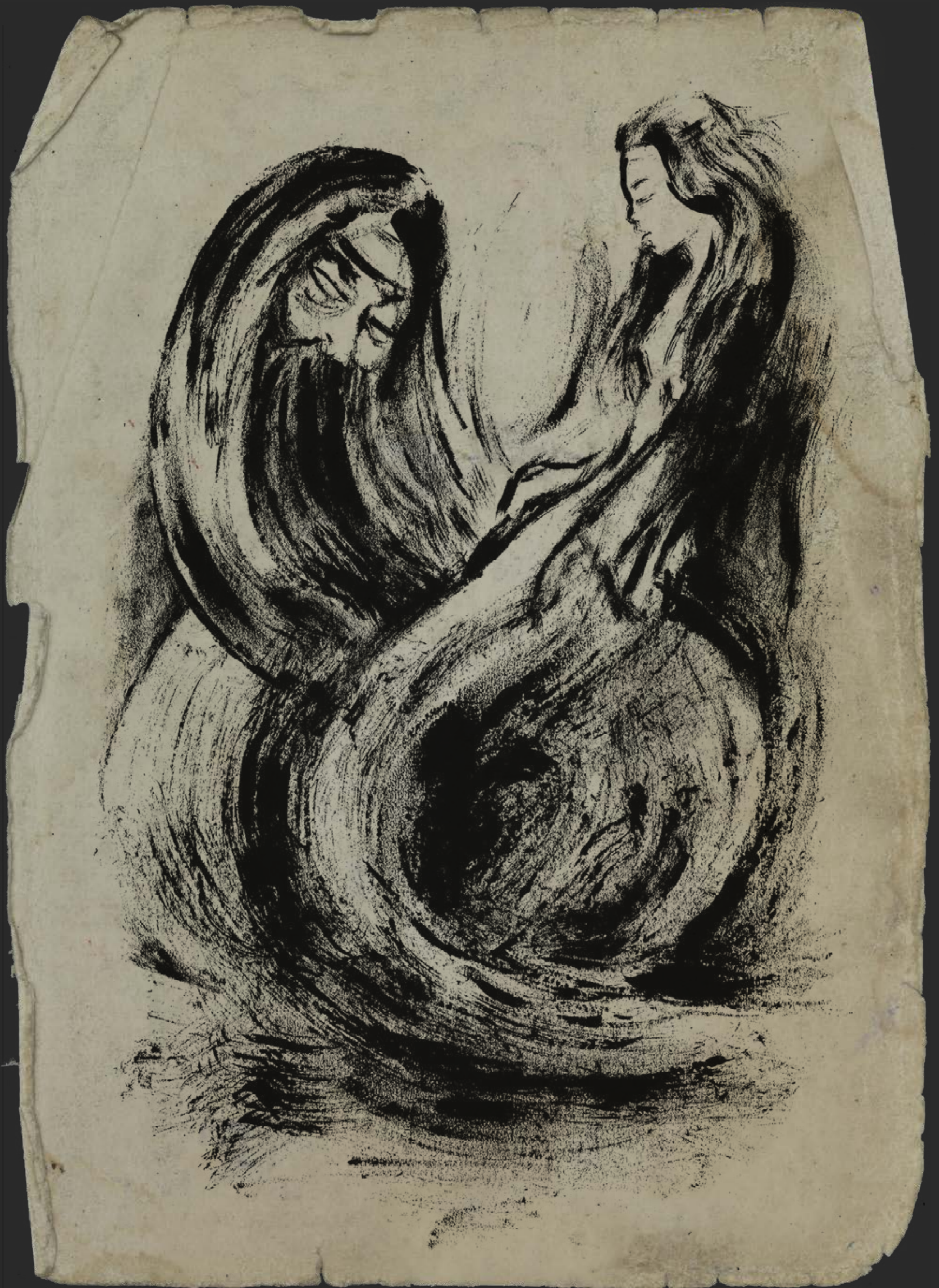
Praise be to Dolya! Praise be to the one whose birth put an end to the Age of Misery and began the Age of Hope!

The days before Dolya's birth were indeed incredibly cruel. The Horrors and Monsters under Chors's command were attacking people's settlements, thereby breaking the word that was given to Mokosh by Veles. Veles had completely lost control over his creatures, and they now considered Chors their king.

Chors was not one to be bargained with, however, as he would not give in to threats or listen to pleas: no weapon of man could stop him or his Horrors. The greatest havoc of all, however, was caused by Žmij, the Snake Prince, who rejected Veles with the utmost disdain.

All pacts were broken. Even the worshippers of the Fire and Svarog himself were not safe from the blind fury of the Horrors. The ground ran red with blood as the arrows rained from the skies upon it. Everyone cared only about their own

kin, trying to save them from annihilation. Withering away like a decaying blossom, humankind fought to exist while Chors's foot hung over it, only waiting for the right moment to stamp it to dust.



## 44. *Mokosh's Sacrifice*

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Mokosh was in despair. The image of Praboh, man, and her own image, woman, were being torn asunder, and there was nothing that she could do about it. After all, she was trapped in the Underworld.

Veles was also suffering, as he had been betrayed by the Horrors and Žmij. Anything born out of jealousy and ire was wild and impossible to tame, and as such, only faithful to its own desires. Such was the bitter lesson that Veles came to learn: and at the price of countless human lives!

Mokosh observed that Veles's strength dwindled, yet she did not understand why. She could not know that he tore his heart apart, and it was that which was making him falter. Even though she pitied Veles and was grateful for his many gifts, she did not love him as she had once loved Praboh. Nonetheless, she decided that since Veles was born out of the desire for love, by satisfying his lust, maybe she could fill him with might afresh.

So she lay with him and gave herself up to him, and he drank her all in like the sands of the desert drink the pouring water of a raging storm.



## 45. *Goddess Born*

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Mokosh was with child! There was new life growing within the body of the goddess of life, meaning that its power was therefore twice as strong!

It was a miracle! The future is indeed unfathomable, and even gods are unable to predict it.

After forty-nine days and forty-nine nights, on the brink of dawn and gloom, Mokosh gave birth to a true child of gods – the first and last goddess actually conceived by gods, instead of being drawn from all things.

The goddess was much akin to Mokosh, endowed with her kindness, mysteriousness, and beauty, but she also inherited Veles's harshness, might, and composure.

So Dolya was born! A fair goddess! The Bringer of Hope! The ruler of both worlds, the wardeness on the Surface and in the Underworld! Our Lady, the Mother of Whisperers and the Keeper of Balance!

Praise be to Dolya! Praise be to the daughter of gods!



## 46. *Harmony Keeper*

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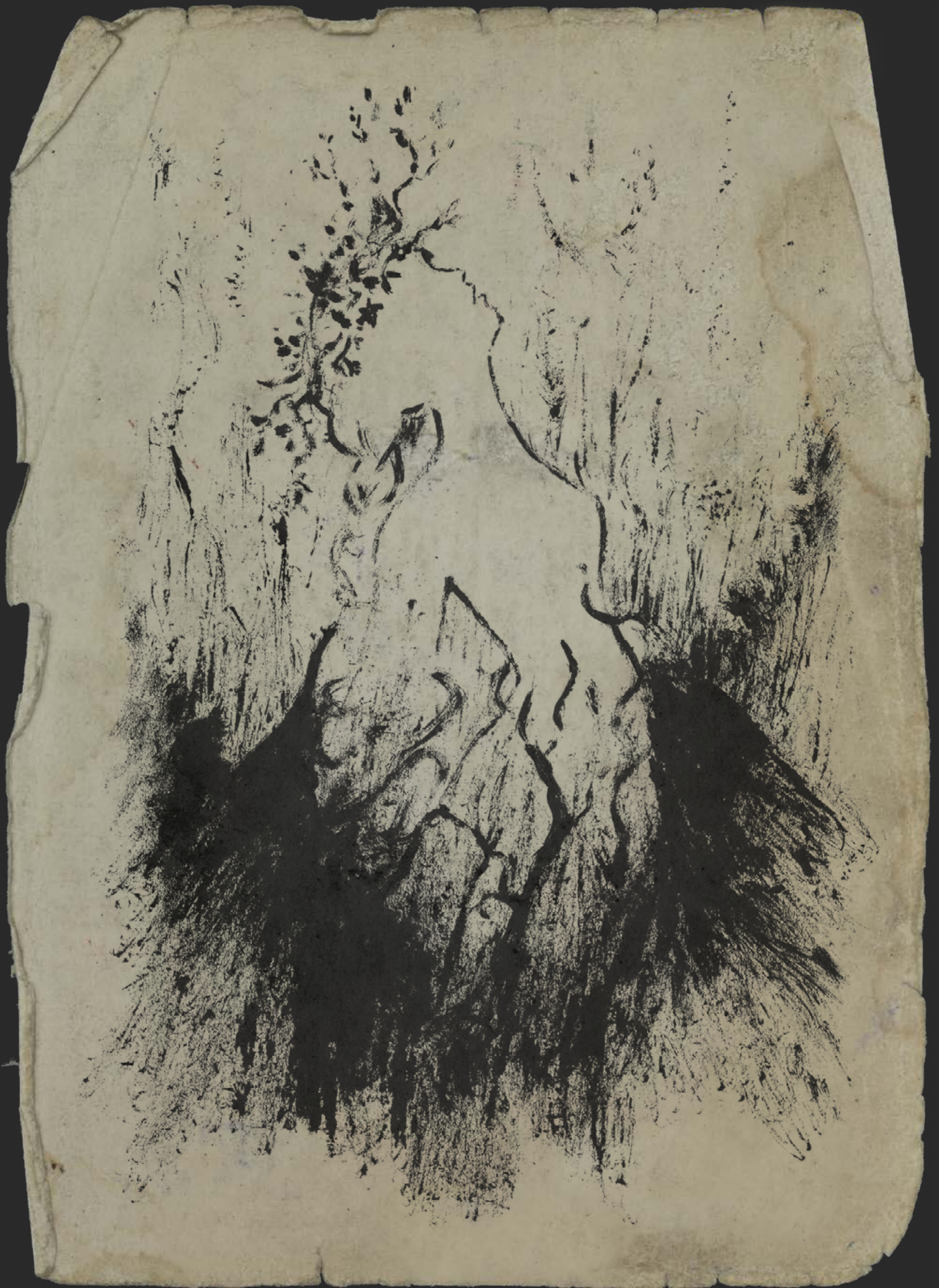
Dolya was conceived by Mokosh and Veles, and as such, she was full of love and wisdom, empathy and prudence, creative force and desire.

She loved nature and all things brought to life by her father, but she also cherished humans, especially women, who had been created in the image of her mother.

She gazed upon the realm of the Surface with jealousy and curiosity, and whenever she managed to escape Veles's sight, she would listen to the stories of the past told by the souls of humans roaming throughout the Underworld.

It was this way that she discovered the dark past of the Horrors and people's greed. Due to her youthful enthusiasm, she believed that everything was meant to be in balance and that chaos and disorder could be quelled by paying respect to the laws of life and death.





## 47. *The Call of the Surface*

---

Dolya's hands emanated the same power that filled Veles's fingers. What he could once do in full, she could do in half, having inherited the rest of her power from her mother.

And so her inherent nature, which was so very much like that of her mother, led her to the furthest tunnel of the Underworld. The roots of the trees combed through her hair, and sand fell on her shoulders as the ground overhead trembled under the footfalls of beasts. She had never been this close to the Surface before.

Dolya placed her hands on the black, damp ground as words started coming out of her mouth. She addressed the dome of the Earth, the Water that connects all, and the roots that entangled like a net.

The ground collapsed, the dampness subsided, and the roots parted, revealing a passage to the Surface.

Dolya came out of the Underworld and looked back only once so that she could seal the passage behind her. She then took strands of her power and weaved a mantle that could

shield her from Mokosh and Veles's sight so that they would not disturb her.



## 48. *Divine Progress*

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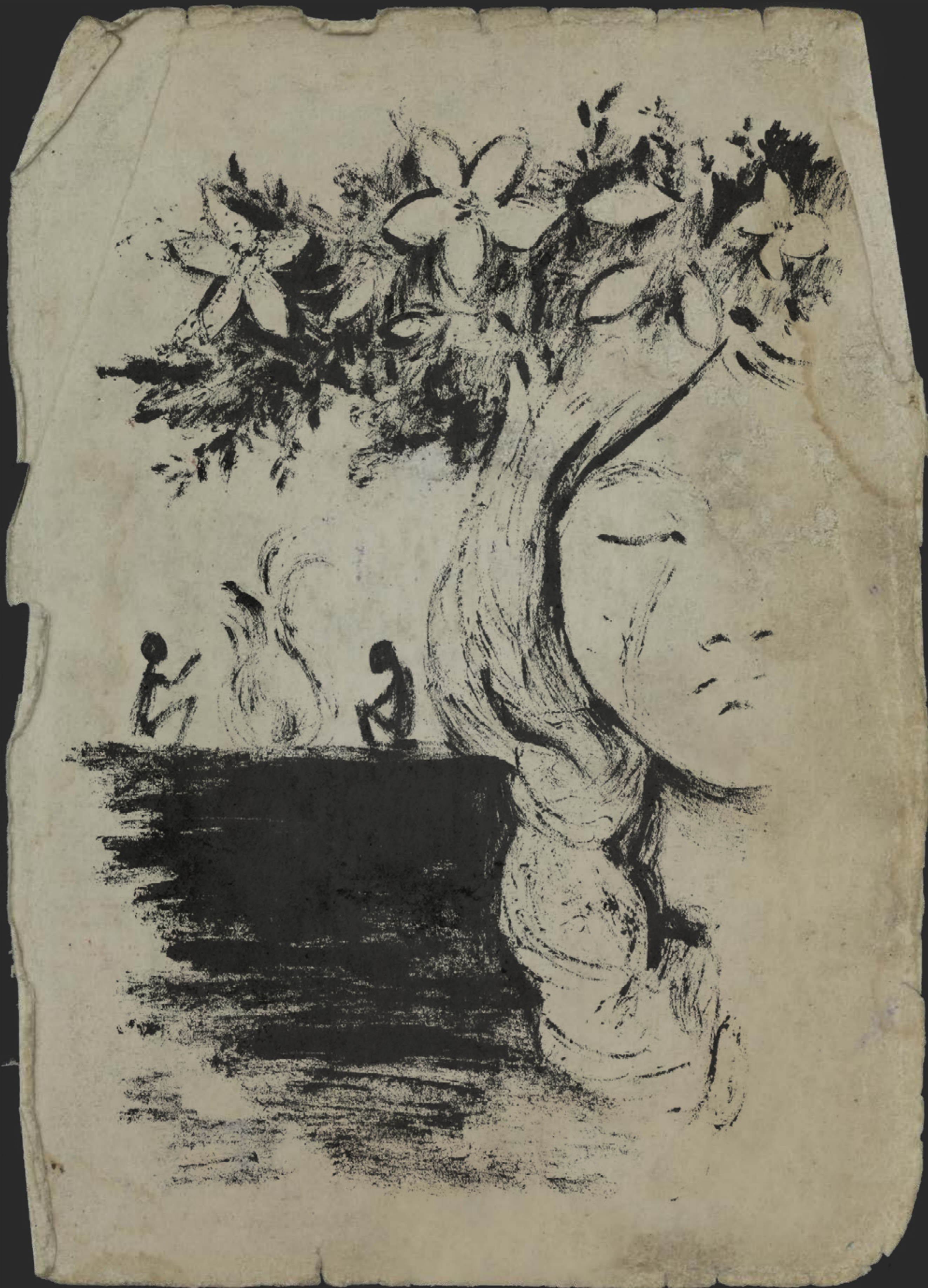
Dolya wandered long and far, bringing good fortune wherever she went.

For she did a wide assortment of deeds and taught many things. She would talk about the laws of life and death, forbidding greed, and demanding respect for all creation. She showed the people how to cultivate land so that it would bear abundant crops and not wither. She also taught them how to make proper use of beasts instead of only wearing their skins and eating their meat, instructing them on how to look after them, milk them, and weave with their wool.

She explained how babies nestled in women's wombs, how fertility depended on both sexes, and how important it was to respect one another and care about each other's health.

Whole tribes would listen to her, nodding their heads and letting out enthusiastic shouts, and as she was leaving, they would drop to their knees and dig their nails into the ground out of sorrow.

However, as soon as Dolya disappeared from sight, all the troubles came back. The feuds were becoming even more bitter due to the greater abundance of riches that she helped them to acquire.



## 49. *Rot*

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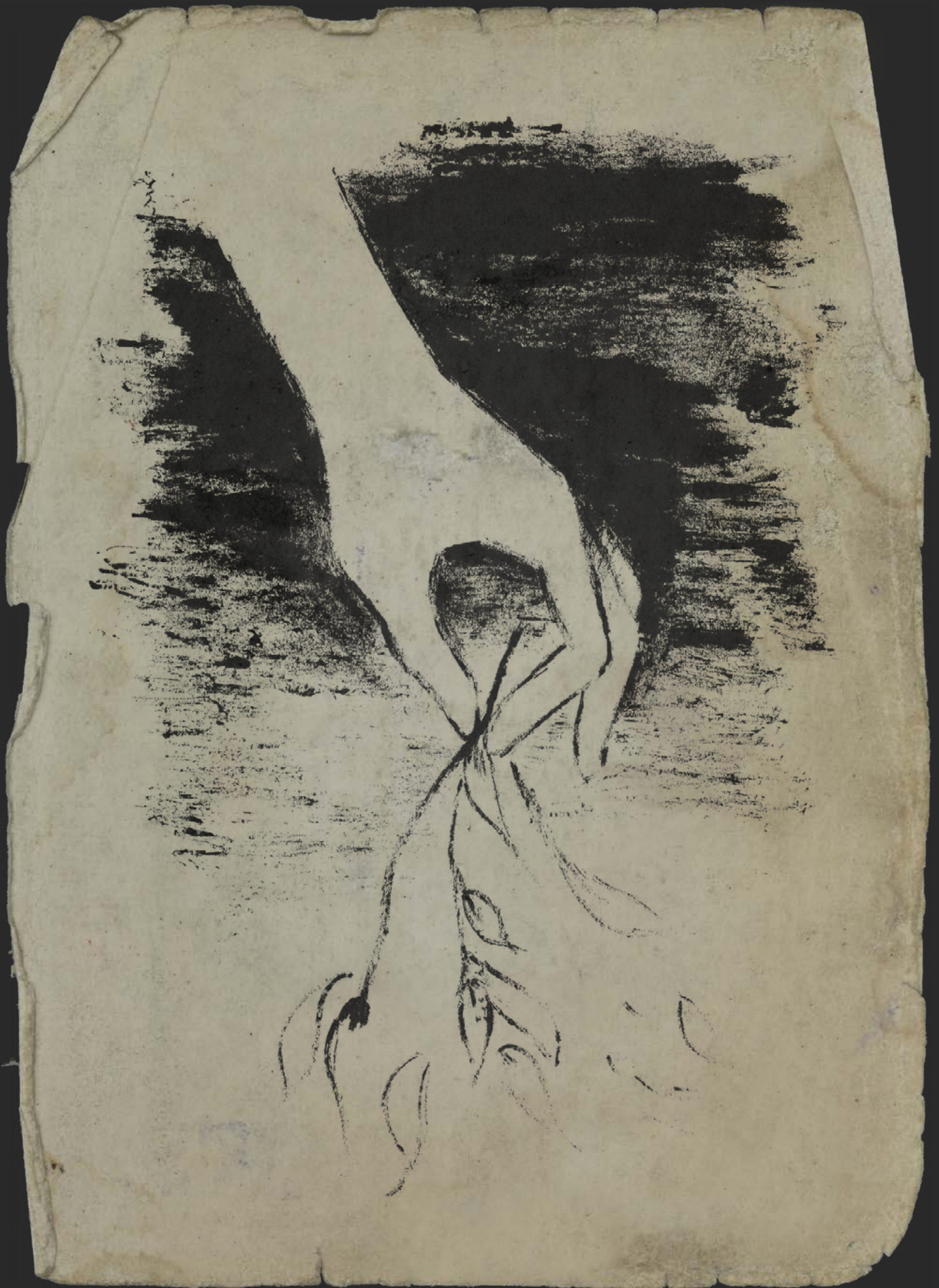
Dolya enjoyed listening to the stories told by the humans, which allowed her to understand how they perceived the world. What she wanted to know the most, however, was the difference between good and evil, as it was something which the gods did not grasp, as they had awakened before good and bad deeds ever came into existence, and the gods did whatever they pleased without ever having to fear death.

The humans, however, distinguished noble and evil deeds, and they either praised or condemned each and every one of them, staying indifferent to none.

And so she discovered godly love, the good and the bad kind, even though both of them still were love. The good kind was the one shared by Mokosh and the God Who Disappeared, while the bad kind was the one which the Lord of the Underworld felt for Mokosh.

Having learned about the miraculous birth of humankind from love and the foul lust that used tricks to destroy all bliss, Dolya's heart filled with shame, anger, and sorrow.

For she realised that she was its rotten fruit.





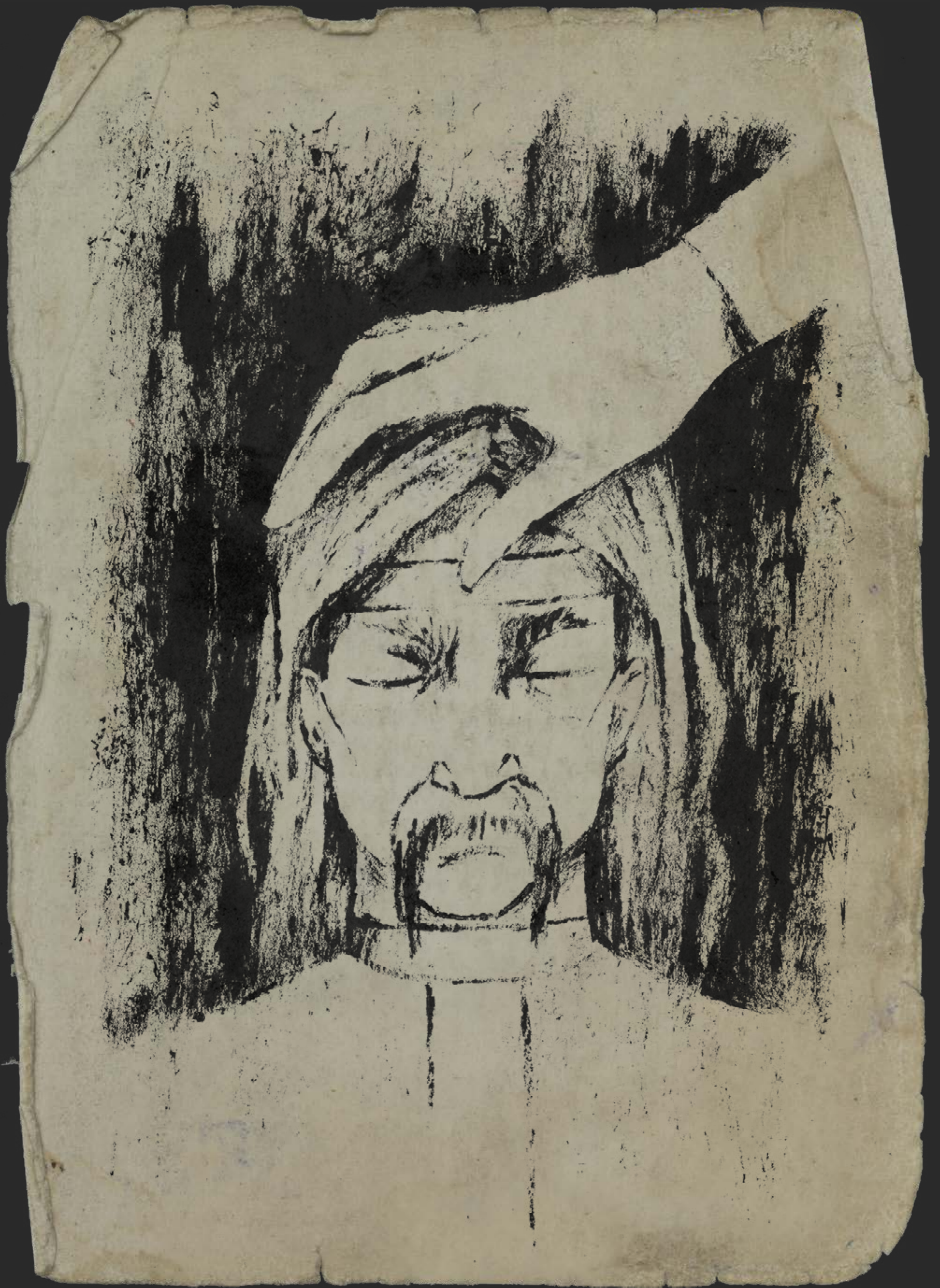
## 50. *Torn Dolya*

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Dolya loved Veles as only a child can love their father. She had admired his realm from the Underworld, sighed when he talked of creating beasts and plants, and frowned with him whenever they saw the humans wreak their destruction. She trusted him and believed that his work was beautiful and great, and his intentions were nothing but pure.

Having listened to the stories told to her by the humans, however, she began to see her memories in a different light. The looks that Veles had given Mokosh, once mild and gentle, became sly and lustful. His fights with the humans were no longer about nature but about conflicts with rival gods.

Dolya had disdained her father while she pitied her mother's fate, and she felt a strange longing for Praboh that mixed with a pang of guilt. She felt sorry for all of them, and at the same time, she was angry at them because all of the creations that she adored, they, the creators, had treated them merely as toys and tools and had abandoned them entirely with no care whatsoever.



## 51. *The Appointment of Whisperers*

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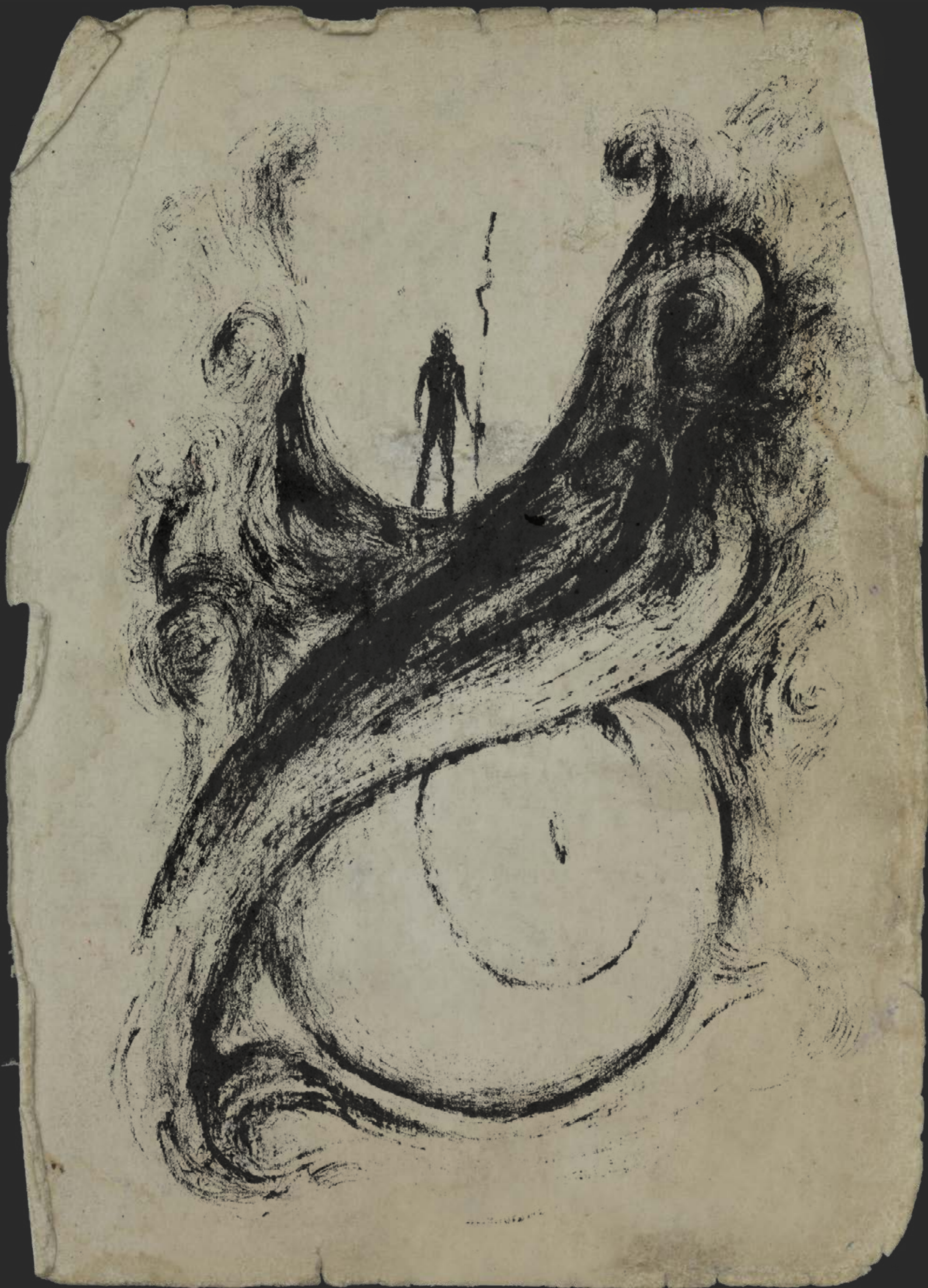
Dolya is fair! She is full of wisdom and might! Praise be to Dolya until the end of time, as there is no friend of the humans greater than her!

Angered by the deeds of the gods, Dolya went to choose her best warriors. Having recognised her, they knelt by her feet and swore loyalty, and she put her hands to their heads. The minds of humankind, however, are unfathomable, and it was impossible to tell who was worthy of Dolya's teachings.

Thus, she did not pour her power into them and instead connected them with gods by a marvellous thread that resembled a root growing into fertile soil to drink its juices. They could henceforth draw the power from the gods, and those more zealous in their faith could achieve even more. To allow them to make use of this blessing, Dolya taught them the language of the gods so that they could weave their new power into any shape they desired.

And since this power was enormous, they took an oath to keep it secret and always uttered their spells under their breath: this was why they were called Whisperers.

And we are their descendants, and they spoke Dolya's  
godly words into our ears. Praise be to our ancestors!



## 52. *Divine Stigma*

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The Whisperers were among all tribes, yet approaching one was not an easy task. Some of them lived in seclusion, others glared around balefully and refused to let a single person near them, while the rest remained hidden. For our ancestors soon came to understand that whoever would display power would be swarmed with people like mosquitoes, and each of these intruders would only put their interests before those of others.

Whisperers were not there for the humans, however, but to serve Lady Dolya; they were not there for people's convenience but to maintain the balance of the world.

Then how was it possible to know a Whisperer when you think you have found one?

Obviously, not by whispers. Without Dolya's blessing, coming either from Dolya herself or another Whisperer, no man nor woman can understand or repeat Incantations.

So how can they be recognised? By looking for marks. When one receives the blessing, their skin is marked with a stain, as if painted with a blood-red ochre. The stain resembles eyes that are sharp yet fierce, half human, half beastly. Which is just like Whisperers themselves should be: allies to no one.



## 53. *The Tale of Libushka*

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The Whisperers and I did not always get along as Whisperers were neither people's friends nor foes, and their services could be treacherous.

Sometimes, when a man died, his wife hanged herself on a branch, so she would take off like a bird and join her spouse in his flight towards the divine abode. Sometimes, she was forced to do just that.

It also happened in the settlement where Libushka was born. She chose her lovers on her own, and she finally gave birth to a beautiful baby. Since it was healthy and strong, she and her man stayed together.

And so Libushka began bearing child after child so that there would always be enough men and women to work and fight. As fights were aplenty, Libushka's lover often took part in them. He had always been victorious, but one day, his horse came back, dragging his lifeless body behind it.

Everyone was devastated by the news, and Libushka most of all, for she did not want to die and fall prey to Veles's serpents.



So she ran to a Whisperer who lived beside the settlement.  
She begged and begged, from dusk until dawn, and the  
Whisperer finally used her power.

And so Libushka became a Navka, who cries every night  
in a trembling voice, and warns men of death.



## 54. *The Tale of Whispers*

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Even though the Whisperers are powerful and their role is vital, their greatest enemy is stupor and carelessness.

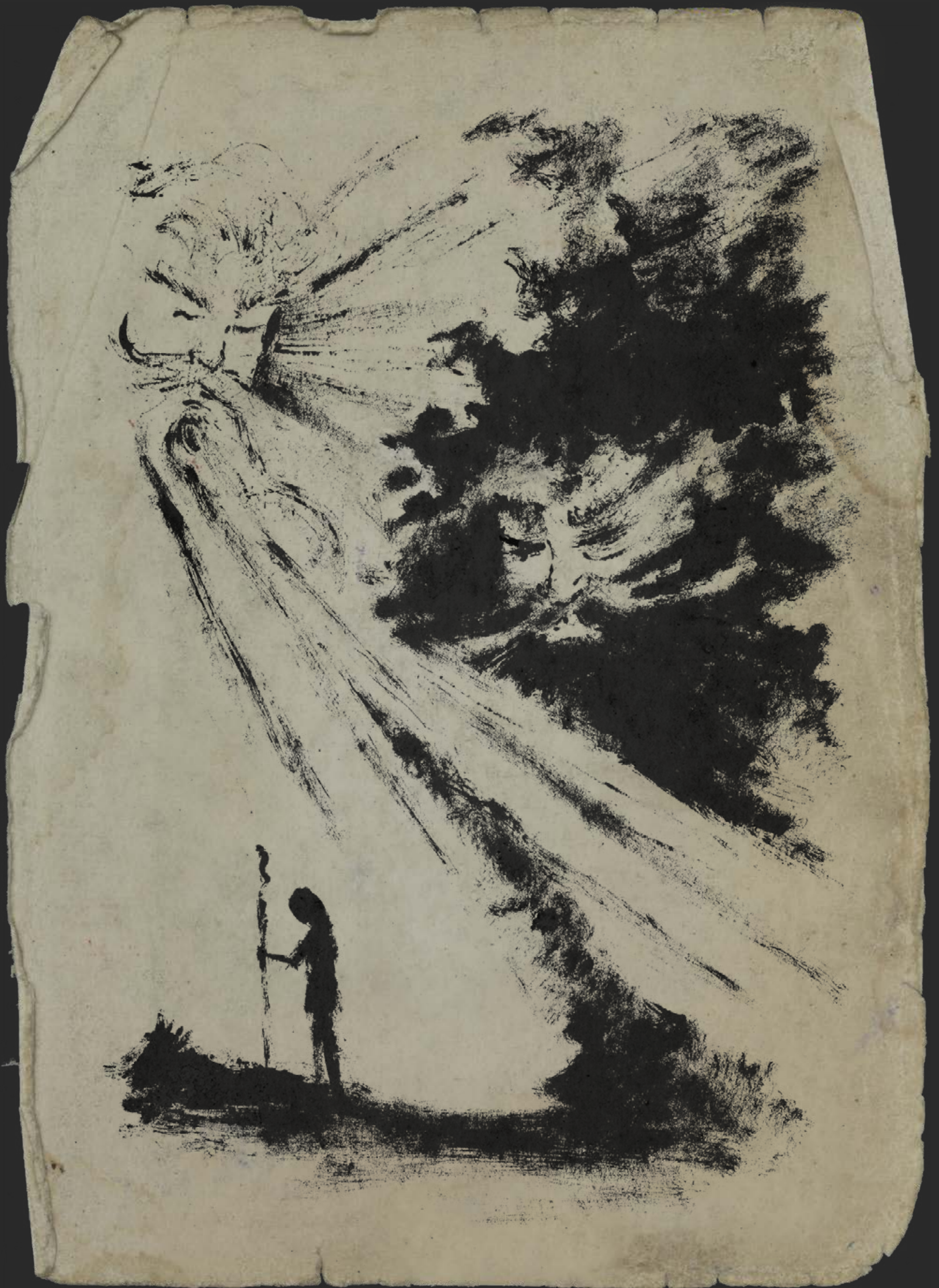
The settlements are diverse, and life in each of them offers various troubles. There was once a settlement where everyone lived happily, and even the Whisperer often dropped by, tired of his seclusion.

Children would swarm him like flies and squeal like piglets whenever he showed them his tricks.

The years passed in peace, and the Whisperer chose one of the boys to be his apprentice. The boy was full of enthusiasm and faith, and wished to help everyone.

He waited for the special day when the sun shone in the skies the longest and began shouting the Whisperers' spells, asking the gods to free the world from the Horrors. He kept calling out until one of the Horrors heard him. So it came to him and ate him, the Whisperer, and everyone in the whole village.

For it is only us, the Whisperers, who may utter Incantations; commoners should be content with ordinary prayers.



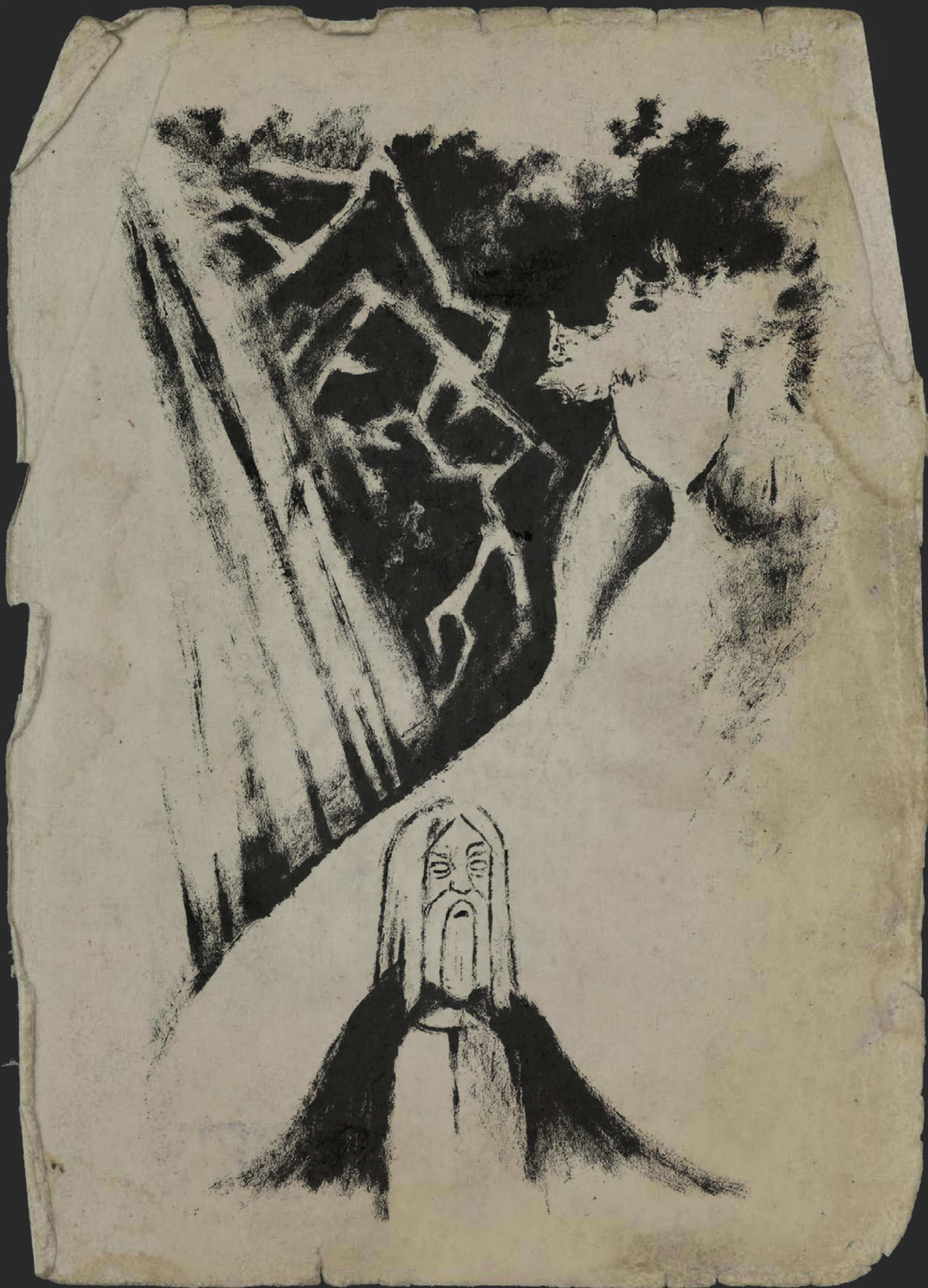
## 55. *Incantations*

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Glorious are the deeds of the gods, and inconceivable are their gifts. To them, a human's loudest prayer is like the murmur of a stream, while the Whisperers' secret Incantations rumble like thunder in their ears!

Oh, how great was the surprise when Daboh and Perun first heard the words of Incantations! And even though they covered their ears with their hands, even though they tried to escape or drown the prayers in their own cries, the sound of the Incantations would not recede.

The gods were angered, as they cared not about the fate of the humans nor their pleas, and they only wished to make Praboh happy by finding the passage to the Underworld, capturing Veles, and freeing Mokosh. Man and woman, who were meant to help with the completion of this task, could not be relied upon, for even though they were swarming the world like locusts, their curiosity and courage were no longer worth anything. Even though the gods enjoyed human prayers, for they were sweet as nectar and did fill them with power, they found these Incantations irksome, as they drained their energy, just like horseflies that drink miraculous blood to satisfy their thirst.



## 56. *Confrontation*

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Perun and Daboh became angry over the humans' impertinence. Who would dare to disturb the gods! Who would have the courage to steal their power! Humankind had become unbridled and deserved damnation!

Hence, the gods descended to the ground now much trampled by human feet and stood before the blasphemer, on whose lips the forbidden whispers danced. But Daboh's shine did not blind him, nor did Perun's grimness worry him. The Whisperer looked straight at the gods' faces, his eyes merciless and brutal, sensible and full of ardour. So great was the courage of the first of us!

And when the gods readied to blow a fatal strike and get rid of the parasite, a woman barged between them. In their passion, they took her for a mortal and began to pummel her with their full might, without a shred of mercy. But she did not back down nor flinch, and neither was the Whisperer touched by even the smallest splinter of their power.

Then they recognised the features mentioned by Praboh, and the comprehension dawned that it was Mokosh's daughter, walking on the Surface, and they felt ashamed by their own violence and bowed to her.





## 57. *Mistrust*

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Neither Daboh nor Perun had ever seen Mokosh, even though they knew Praboh's longing tales and the figure of a woman whom he created in the name of Mokosh and matching her beauty. There was something else in Dolya, however, a feature they could not recognise – raw as rock and deep as darkness, unlike Praboh or the human man.

Thus, the gods figured out that she must be a daughter of Veles as well, and they were reluctant to trust her. And when they asked her where her mother was and how to reach the Underworld, Dolya understood that they did not care about the fate of the world and only about their orders from Praboh. So she told them that if they would help her to accomplish her plans, she would point them to the entrance to Veles's kingdom in return.

And, as they could not force her, for she was unyielding to their powers, they gave her their word and promised to help the Whisperers.



## 58. *Daboh's Gifts*

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Daboh was the first to fulfill the promise to help. And, since he had offered a part of his heart to the humans in the past, which they made into a false deity, he needed to atone for his great mistake.

Thus, he first cut off a lock of his divine hair to make a rope from it and gave the powerful gift to Dolya.

In his second gesture, he reached for the skin on his arm, cut out a whole piece, and gave it to Dolya as magical armor.

Thirdly, he took his divine little finger and broke it off like a twig to give to Dolya as a powerful staff.

Fourthly, he took hold of his eyelid, and he plucked it off like a rose petal, giving it to Dolya as a hood that would protect anyone from everyone's eyes.

Fifthly, he reached to— [the text becomes unclear]



## 59. *Perun's Gifts*

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Having seen the gifts from Daboh, Perun became inflated with pride, as he did not intend to be outdone in any way.

Thus, he took a black cloud that forever followed him and formed it like a spider's silk, enclosed it within an acorn, and gave it to Dolya as an all-powerful talisman.

Next, he took out his lowest rib, shining and springy, bent it backward, and pulled a tendon from his arm over it. Then the bow thus made he placed in Dolya's hands.

Dolya was not much delighted by the gifts, however, and that sparked the pride within Perun's heart. So, he reached to the sky where a storm was brewing, grabbed a lightning bolt with his bare hands, and hardened it within in his divine grasp, forging it into a twisted blade marked with golden and silver waves.

As even that did not impress Dolya, with boiling anger, he removed his whole forearm and made it into a club that could crush all fetters and barriers into dust.

And Dolya was as amazed by the sight of it as she was speechless.



## 60. *About Artifacts*

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The legends of the ancients mention objects of great power called 'artifacts,' which are alleged of divine origin. Many mighty chieftains would depart on unfortunate expeditions, seduced by tales from nursemaids and words once whispered by sages as old as the stars. How many of these artifacts were ever found? How many were examined? The pages on which these ancient myths were written shed no light upon the genuine shapes or numbers of these artifacts, offering nothing but references to dreary and fanciful symbols. And so, chasing old wives' tales, as thrilling though they seemed, was a fruitless adventure.

As Master of the Grand Keep, I have seen numerous alleged artifacts, but none of them revealed any traces of miraculous properties. I attribute every tale of Monsters and curses I have heard to swamp fumes and dull minds consumed by mead.

Nevertheless, as is my duty, I intend to investigate the legends recorded in this tome and fill in whatever blanks I find with what I have heard during my many distant travels.





## 61. *About Dolya*

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Despite their primitive beliefs, the ancient tribes from before the Great Curse developed a fascinating image of Dolya – sorrowful and contemplating the chimerical nature of humanity. It is a surprising spark of reflection that shows comprehension of how brutal feuds caused by mindless hostility had a destructive impact on the environment.

Myths speak of a deity that developed a tender affection for people, but saw that many of them desire power, become demoralized, and violate eternal laws – especially in such large, primitive bands.

Could it be a sign that these primitive bands, these barbarians, are headed toward the same enlightenment that is characteristic of our civilization? Does the existence of this concern give them full rights and make the conquest of their lands unjust?

However glittering a trace of that thought may be, it is nothing against the dirt in which it vanishes. Barbarians did not abandon their primitive ways and, unfortunately, it seems they will never be able to do so.



## 62. *The Great Curse*

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According to the legends of the ancients, Dolya trusted neither deities nor people. It was believed that the Divine Daughter sealed the artifacts against human greed and the cunning of gods who could imbue the objects with unfavorable effects. Dolya infused the seals with her full power and thus could not open the gates to the Underworld and free Mokosh, but it is said that she never regretted this sacrifice.

It was both a blessing and a bane, for whoever broke their oath to Dolya fell victim to a dreadful curse.

And so, Dolya gave the artifacts to the Whisperers to be divided equally among themselves. But there were more of them than there were divine gifts, and the world was becoming more and more infested with Monsters and Horrors. Therefore, the Whisperers had to decide which of them would carry the artifacts, which settlements deserved to be saved, and which would be left for the foul beasts to feed on.

Finally, they agreed that they would all care for the artifacts, and wherever rumors of a Horror surfaced, rush to the rescue with their divine gifts.



## 63. *On the Fame of Whisperers*

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Though it is difficult to determine how the fantasies about artifacts and Whisperers flourished, something must have indeed happened, as there was clearly a period of stabilization in the history of ancient peoples. Whatever the myths referred to as Horrors – be they natural disasters, wild beasts, or chieftains of great, long-forgotten tribes – ceased their attacks.

The ancient legends attribute this to the Whisperers, who spread throughout the world wielding Dolya-given artifacts after taking an oath that they would never act to harm the balance of the world.

All Whisperers were honored and glorified in song. Some of them can even still be heard today, though their lyrics have been changed in the face of further strange events.



## 64. *Proofs of Divine Power*

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The Whisperers' journeys through the world were filled with obstacles. They fought Horrors and all worldly plagues that could not escape the watchful eyes of Veles or the attention of Svarog's warlike followers.

Soon, the grim gods and no-less-grim humans became jealous of the Whisperers' fame and powerful artifacts, which were as scarce as red stars in the silvery skies. Yet, anyone attempting to ambush a Whisperer and cause them harm would fall from an invisible blow or sudden illness. Accounts say that before they attacked, Whisperers – as their name suggests – uttered quiet Incantations. Could this whisper be the hiss of fumes from toxic potions? Maybe it the whir of a new, innovative sling? What was this weapon that brought certain death whistling through the air? And if it was so mighty and fabled, then why was it never stolen, and why does no trace of it remain?

Could the Whisperers really wield divine power? These are the questions that scholars and Masters of the Grand Keep ask themselves while studying fragments of these ancient writings.





## 65. *Veles Defeated*

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According to myth, when Veles finally learned of the Whisperers' Incantations, he was more devastated than by the tales of the artifacts wielded against his Horrors. After all, the artifacts were given to people by gods who were unkind to him, so that came as no surprise to him. Furthermore, they were used against the Horrors that had disobeyed him and attacked human settlements despite Veles's promise to Mokosh. Thus, he was not angered and did not oppose it.

Not like the whispers. One day, Veles took the form of a bear to sneak up to the surface unnoticed. There, he heard the Whisperers, and in their spells, he recognized the same chants and tremors he had once taught his daughter, Dolya. He had been betrayed by his own offspring to the insolent humans.

What was left of his heart crumbled to dust, as did his spirit.



## 66. *Doomsday*

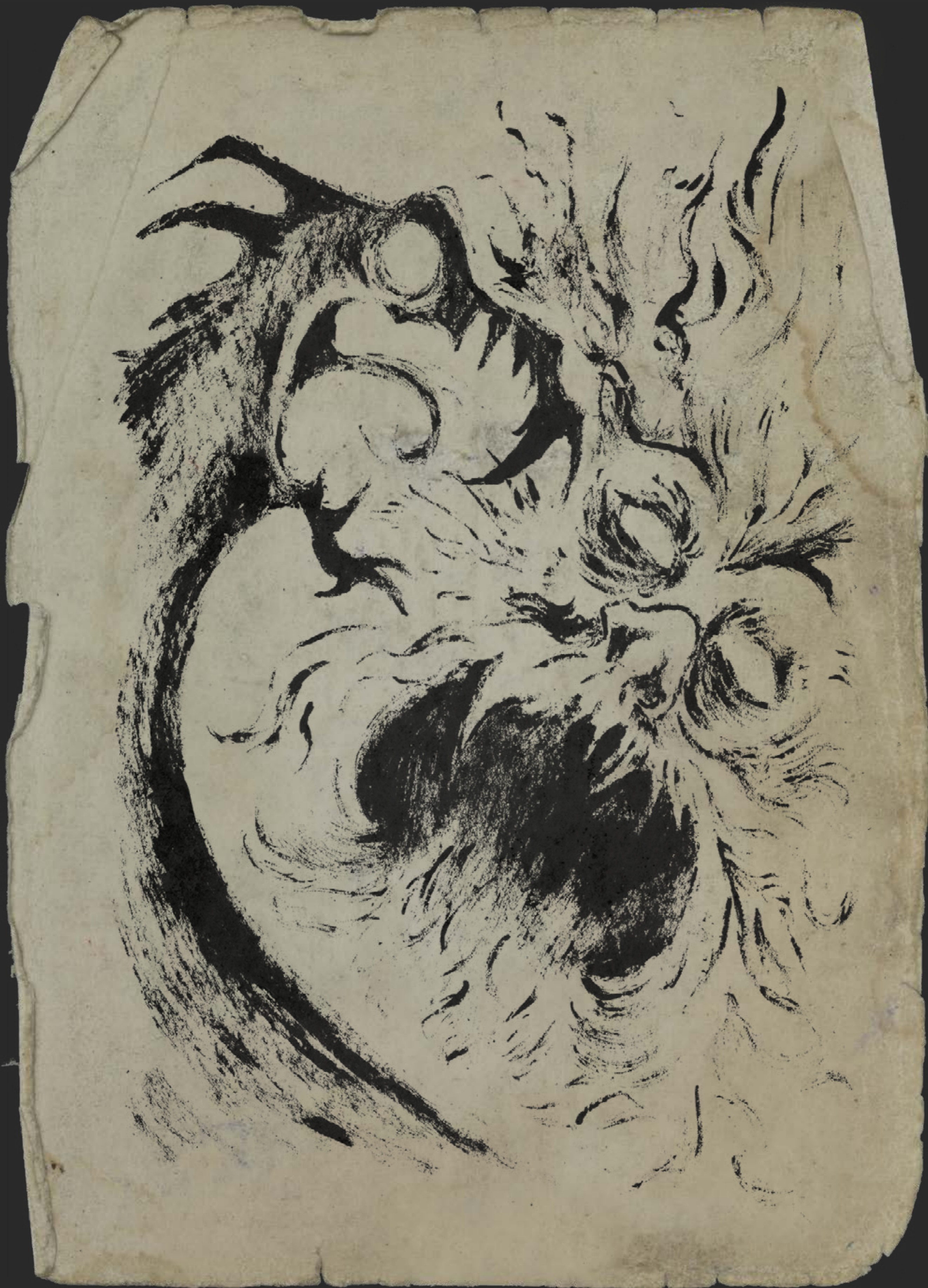
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Veles forgave his daughter because he loved her dearly and knew she had chosen her path out of righteousness. Yet, he had no trust for humankind. He loathed and despised them because he had seen plenty of them stripped of their miraculous bodies when they stood before him as souls – foul, wicked, and balancing between naivety and hatred.

And so, Veles decided the time for doomsday had come, but because his strength had left him, he needed other hands to do his work. However, Chors craved human fear like air, and Svarog could not glow without his followers.

So, Veles went to the proudest of his creations, Žmij – Prince of Snakes and General of Horrors – and was greeted with laughter because of his hunched and troubled appearance.

But Veles was cunning and knew his own heart, a part of which he had given to Žmij. So when he spoke, Žmij listened, reflected, and agreed to the secret pact.



## 67. *Trepidation*

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Žmij abandoned Chors and the cover of the night, and in the light of day, his appearance was truly horrific! His legs were like stone pillars, his body like solid rock, and his mouth like a bottomless cave. Whoever saw him fell dead at the very sight and parted with their soul, which was snatched by the Žmij's jaws.

The Snake Prince went to Svarog, and the god trembled before him because he lacked the power to defeat him. He knew that Žmij no longer obeyed Veles, and no pacts could save him from Žmij's gluttony because the relentless king, Chors, cared only for the beasts of night that kneeled before him.

But Žmij himself offered a pact. Svarog soon realized there had to be something the Prince feared or needed and could either not expect aid from Chors or did not wish to confide his fears to him.

Even if Svarog suspected the trap, he would not see through Veles's and Žmij's cunning.



## 68. *Fall of the First Whisperer*

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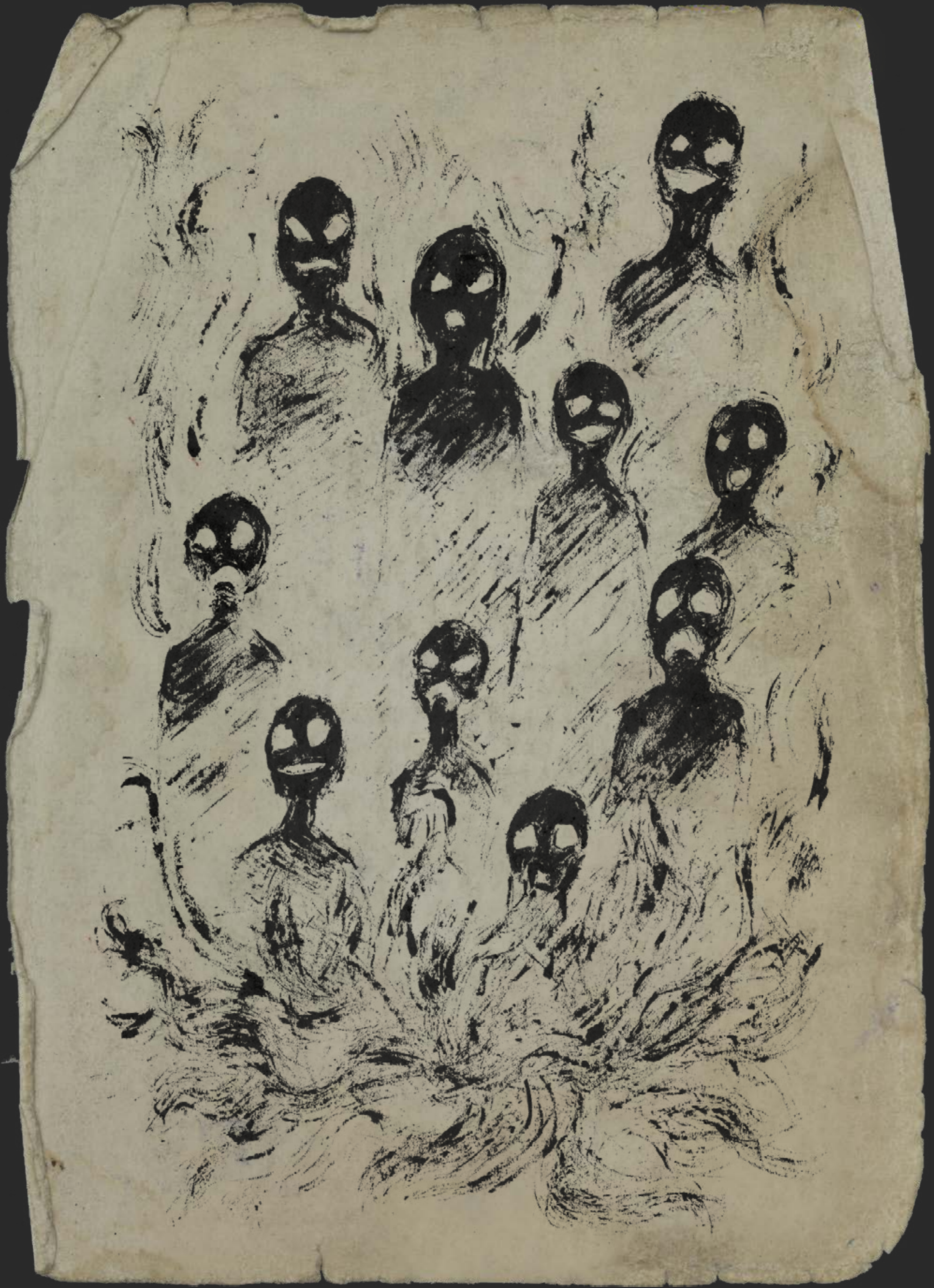
And so, Svarog and Žmij went to a Whisperer, and as they walked side by side – living fire and living rock – every creature trembled and wailed in terror. Only Dolya's servant dared to meet them, so he stood in their way with a whisper on his lips and a divine artifact in his hand.

But the spells could not harm Žmij, for Dolya's whispers could not harm the heart of Veles or the blood of Mokosh. And since Žmij did not trouble people or threaten the balance of the world, the Whisperer dared not use the artifact against him. If he did, he would break his oath to Dolya.

And so, Žmij snatched the artifact from his hand, swallowed it, and spoke in the human tongue:

“I am the creation of Veles and Mokosh, the first among Horrors and the prince of this world. Fall at my feet and perish or follow me and live.”

And the Whisperer knew it to be true and followed his new master.





## 69. *Betrayal*

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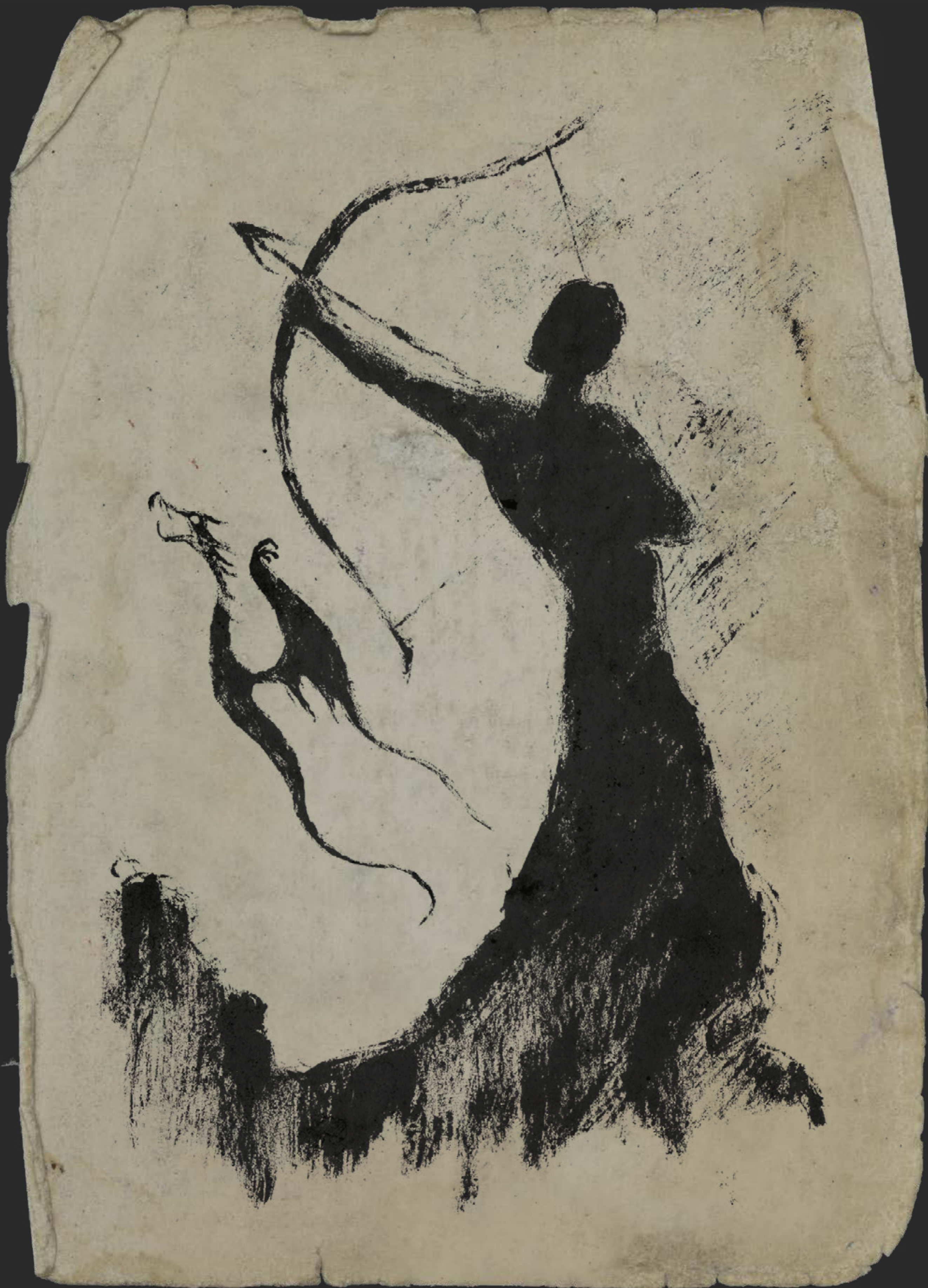
Svarog and Žmij traveled from one town to another, followed by a treacherous retinue of converted Whisperers clad in monstrous masks. The foul procession burned houses and devoured souls, looking for Dolya's servants along the way. Wherever they found one, they always did the same thing.

Their promises of power, might, and harnessing of death were beautiful.

Their threats of carnage, devoured souls, and eternal enslavement were equally terrifying.

While many feared the danger, many were tempted by Žmij's tales, and so the Whisperers succumbed – some out of greed and lust for power, others to save their settlements. Serving under a new master, their whispers turned to hisses that resembled those of a serpent.

Though some were brave and honorable enough to oppose the Serpent Prince, each of them was turned to ash – along with everyone in their settlements.



## 70. *Misery*

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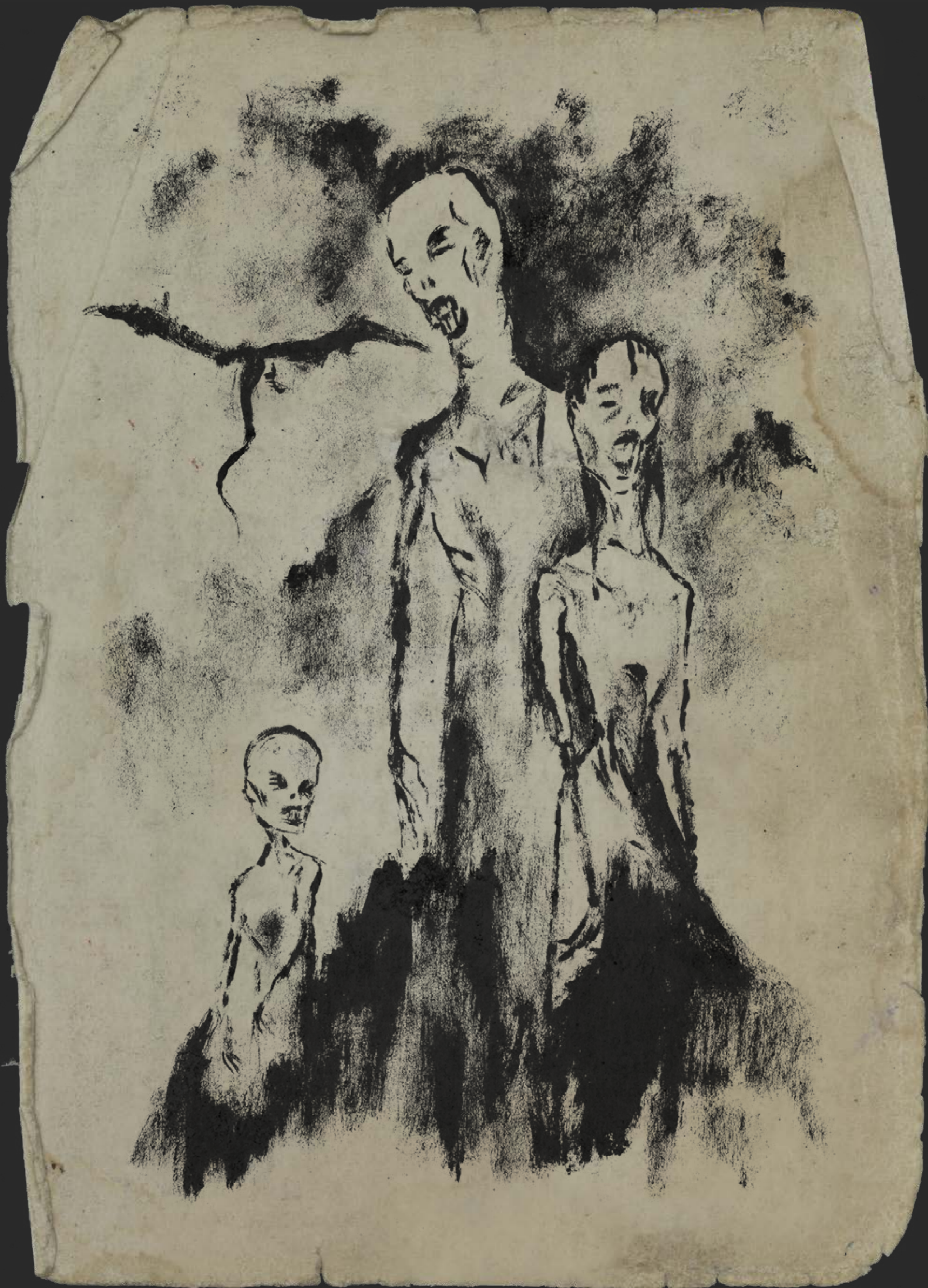
Having swallowed the artifact, Žmij felt a sudden surge of power, but also a painful gnawing at his insides. When he spat it out in secret, he saw that it was made from a divine body and meant as a weapon against Veles's Horrors.

Wanting to seize every artifact, he ordered his group to push onward.

One of the treacherous Whisperers, more cunning than the others, detached from the retinue and rushed to nearby settlements under the guise of a friendly messenger. When he finally found an artifact keeper and asked to see the relic, his request was denied. However, when the keeper saw the dreadful Viper approaching, he handed the divine weapon to the traitor.

Having acquired the relic, a marvelous bow, the traitor aimed it at his retinue, striking all who had wronged him and sparing his allies. When the frightened keeper saw that Viper feasted on souls and grew in power, he tried to retrieve the bow but was also struck down by the traitor.

Then, the blood of the righteous man spurted forth and broke the artifact's seal, casting a grim shroud of undying death over the eyes of all who were near.



## 71. *Death's Arms*

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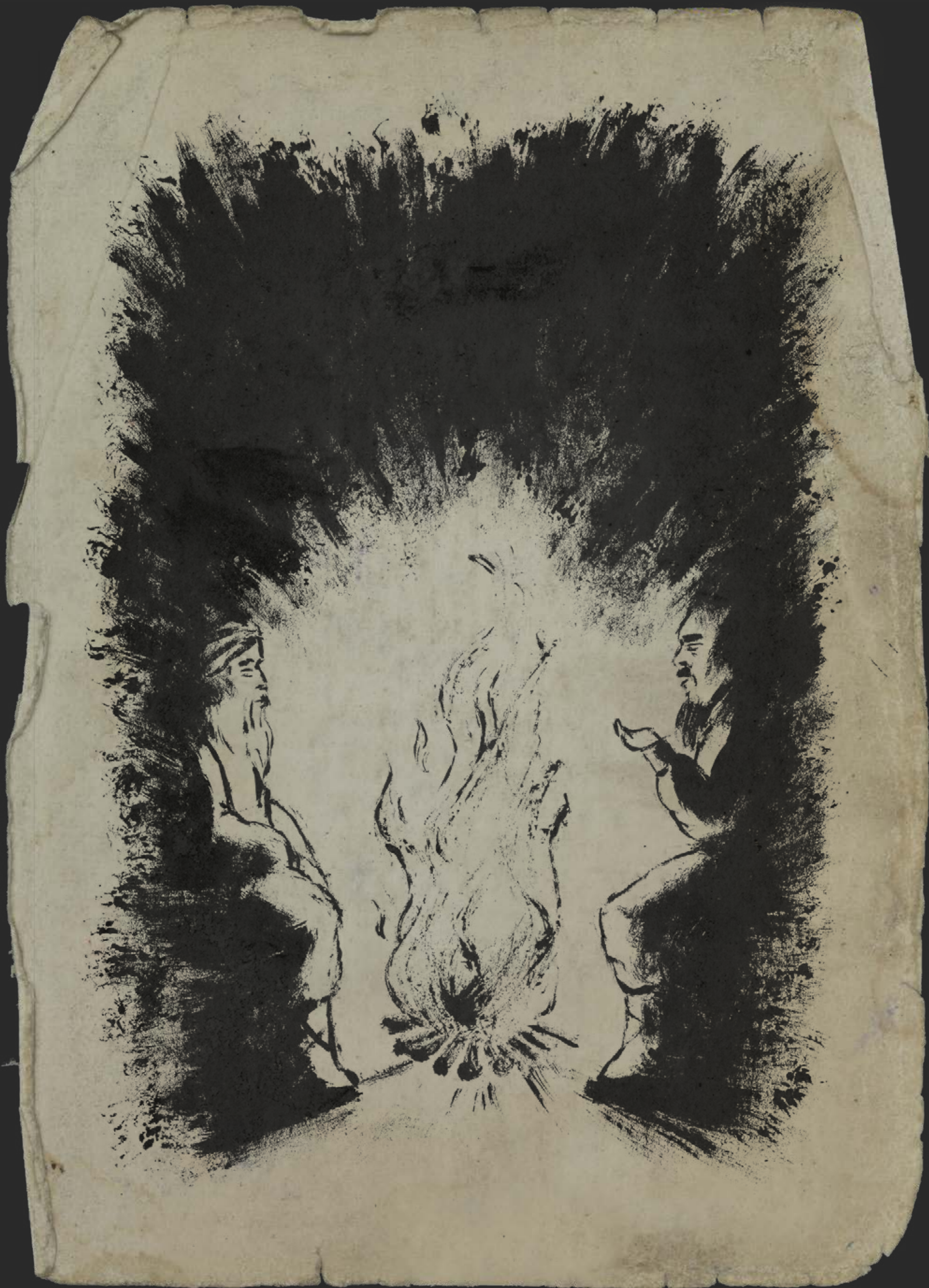
A dreadful day it was, as if the sun had suddenly gone out and night had fallen. A veil descended over the people's eyes, clouding their minds and binding their tongues.

All who lived where the Whisperer lived died but somehow also stayed alive. What a terrible punishment for breaking an oath to Dolya! An indescribable price for compromising the world's balance!

They say Dolya is just and dearly loves humankind, but not more than she loves her father Veles's creation, with all its beasts and plants. To save it, she will not hesitate to sacrifice the lives of greedy men and women.

All people were struck by the Great Curse as they stood. Their bodies died, but souls remained trapped inside, frantically flailing their limbs. Like moths to a flame, they circled the artifact, still in the Whisperer's hand. Like gray smoke, they drifted over the ground scorched by frightening power.

Seeing this, Svarog and Žmij retreated, amazed by the artifact's strength, for had they come closer, they too could have been struck. Having lost many of his Whisperers, the Snake Prince knew it was no hoax, so they both left, leaving the cursed tribe at eternity's mercy.



## 72. *Deliberations*

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Messengers carried the news quickly from one settlement to another. Soon, people learned of the cursed tribe, and the Whisperers' fame faded away like a leaf carried off by the wind.

The people asked their chieftains and one another: why should we pay with our souls for the mistakes of a Whisperer? What will our fate be when Žmij casts its shadow over us and the flames of Svarog lick at our feet? Should we surrender at once and die in torment or succumb to the curse's whim and let it transform us into mindless atrocities?

And what if the Whisperers were to use this fear to claim rule? What if they made us do their bidding under the threat of using these artifacts? What if they're too foolish, insolent, and hungry for power? Or lacking in bravery, persistence, and cunning? How should we know whether the world is balanced, as Dolya wished, or whether the scales tip to one side?





## 73. *Exile*

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So came the day of the great choice, the weight of which is evidenced by a rarely written record of the chieftains' parley. Its most significant part can be translated as follows:

“Dread, uncertainty and two incorrect choices: let the Whisperers stay and risk the curse's wrath or command them to leave and lose protection from the Horrors. Whichever path we take, an open mouth of foul death is all that awaits.”

However, since the ancients believed that after death their souls went to the gods, they did not want to be trapped in their dead bodies.

So, with the help of brave men and women, they seized the Whisperers' artifacts and chased them away. But they did not know the secret Incantations, so they decided to hide the items of power in the farthest corners of the world.

From that point on, the Whisperers were forbidden to return to human settlements because you do not let disease-carrying rats into your home.

And so they – Whisperers and servants of Dolya – dispersed, banished to eternal wandering, and crushed by the same fear that had once called them into servitude.



## 74. *Wandering*

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Since then, there was no settlement where the Whisperers could set foot because every newcomer was stripped of their rags and examined for secret signs of Dolya. Should their bodies reveal marks or skin paintings resembling wild gazes, alarms were raised, and the wanderer was chased away. Whether it was a work of nature created in a mother's womb or indeed a secret mark of the Whisperers, the person was damned, and only fear of a curse could save them from death. Still, many have fallen, cunningly attacked, struck from a distance, or tracked and slaughtered in their sleep.

So the Whisperers wandered, forever silent and alone. As their bodies were stronger, their lives were longer, and time moved slowly for them. Their despair was also doubled because the world withered before their eyes and, untamed by their whispers and divine artifacts, foul powers grew in strength.



## 75. *Bohan*

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Though Whisperers' lives were long and blessed with might, they still eventually returned to Mokosh's embrace through death, and others worthy of Dolya's secret teachings were born. But the goddess did not return to enlighten them, and with each generation, the once-miraculous whispers lost more power.

However, there was still one man who remembered the tales of the godly artifacts – how Daboh and Perun cut them from their divine bodies, how the Whisperers divided them among themselves for the good of humankind, and how they were eventually hidden throughout the world.

The man knew that only the artifacts had the power to tame Žmij, and he was ready to risk cursing his own soul to defeat the enemy.

Bohan was his name, and songs demanded that he should be remembered forever because he offered salvation to all troubled people.



## 76. *The Rebirth of Unity*

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The world was in decline. Human hearts were filled with everlasting dread and hatred that was fueled by howling beasts and the hissing of Žmij's servants.

At first, the Whisperers avoided one another and other men and women, but with time, they grew weary of exile. How were they supposed to recognize each other? How were they supposed to know that an encountered wanderer was not a maniac tracking them like prey?

Eventually, courage and pride claimed their hearts because they could no longer stand to watch humankind fall and be crushed by monstrous paws and claws.

It was Bohan who spoke first, when at twilight, after a long journey, he came across a woman cooling herself by a stream. She was as calm as a dragonfly sitting on a reed and as fair and light as a rainbow after a storm.

The water echoed his words when he whispered to her and when the woman turned to him, the air sparkled with power.





## 77. *Divine Heroes*

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They walked together from the moment they discovered each other. When other exiles saw them, they too recognized who they were because their eyes were once again wild and filled with divine wisdom.

The Whisperers roamed through forests and wastelands, traversed valleys and mountains, then crossed rivers and rifts. Bohan led them as if led by Dolya herself until a whole crowd of them had gathered.

As they wandered, they battled both Horrors and wicked men. They fought for neither the side of humankind or the Horrors but in the name of the world's balance. So, whoever struck another out of greed or hatred had to be stopped.

The Whisperers had been battered, damned, forgotten, scorned, abused, and abandoned as if they had drowned in mud and could not catch their breath.

Eventually, they had pulled themselves up and away from failure's embrace and once again became proud, free, just, and unforgiving – as divine heroes are and shall be forever!



## 78. *Covenant*

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The actions of the Whisperers were noble, though they brought them neither fame nor allies.

Birds circled the skies and flew away, only to come back again. Flowers pierced through the soil, then wearily lowered their heads. The trees bore fruit then lost their leaves, and snow melted, only to fall again. Time passed ruthlessly, and it was only the suffering that never stopped, nested as it was in human hearts like a worm in rotten meat.

The Whisperers also grew old. Some passed away in silence, drained of strength, while others more suddenly due to the claws of Horrors. Though they had searched all around the world, they could not find any trace of the Great Artifacts.

So they sat together, joined in a silent union of hearts, and called it the Covenant. They all swore oaths, renewing the vows their ancestors once made to Dolya and bound by this pact yet again, dispersed around the world to find their successors.



## 79. *The Fall of the World*

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The tales of barbarians are full of bitterness, their eyes full of despair as they look upon invaders. What can a handful of brave men do against a horde blinded with madness? How can a sentenced man oppose fate's judgment?

The efforts of the mythical Whisperers were in vain, and their sacrifice was no use. Plagues fell on humankind one after another. The Horrors fell under the spell of Chors, and only a few remained loyal to Veles. The tribes, plunged into endless wars, abandoned their faith in the Old Gods, and blamed them for all their misfortunes.

In the eyes of the humans, Dolya was the most dreadful of all deities because she turned them into wraiths and trapped their souls so they could not flee to the boundless skies.

The artifacts vanished from the face of the Earth, expelled from settlements with the Whisperers, devoured by beasts, dragged into the mud, and were otherwise hidden from human sight.

So, the hope for miraculous salvation has died.

The ages of worship, faith, tales, and spells were all over.

It was time for iron, arms, writings, and intrigue.



## 80. *Godlessness*

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Humankind was engrossed in the fight for survival. If someone was not felled by a blade, they instead fell from pestilence, famine, poison, or madness.

Have these plagues been coming from the Horrors? Or were humans bringing them on themselves by killing through tribal feuds and bloodshed, by destroying their own settlements out of greed, and by worshiping false deities who led them to madness?

However, the Horrors did not disappear. They were spreading fear broader than ever before – not only to appease Chors but for their own use, either murdering or demanding offerings in return for peace.

The Old Gods drew silent and turned their gaze away from the surface, divine priests died out, and charlatans took their place – enchanter of treacherous potions and false advisors.

Chieftains were rising and falling, and each one was crueler than the one before, but each of them called themselves gods' chosen ones, the children of the gods, before they finally said they were gods themselves.

Those are the foundations of new civilizations; this is  
the motherland of their rulers! Bad tidings await anyone  
who finds themselves under their reign.

Praise be to our people! Praise be to the civilization  
of the Great Gord!





## 81. *Twilight of the Whisperers*

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So the legends faded away, much like the spirit of their bards started to fade. Few heroes from the past remain, and it is doubtful that any of them have the noble blood of Bohan in their veins. You cannot hear tales of a warrior similar to him anymore, a person who received divine power and would give up his life in a fight to save the world. The legends have fallen! The myths are vilified in the same way as the idols of the forgotten gods.

If there remained even one, someone could ask and plead for Dolya's trust so she would remove the scales from the eyes of mortals and allow them to see where the Great Artifacts were hidden!

But who is still praying to Dolya?

Are there any Whisperers still among the barbarians?

Does anyone still understand the divine tongue?

Who pledges their life to fulfilling a promise?

Heroes are no more – moan the barbarians. There are no righteous people anymore. There is no one person worthy of divine anointment. Let's call upon the gods! Let's cry and beg! Let them pity us and send down their children to us; children whose eyes are hungry like those of wolves, and clear, and full of might like mountain lakes.



## 82. *The Fall of Praboh*

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The world of Praboh fell like a pile of stones, scattered like a sand dune, strewn plunged as a tree smashed down by a gale.

Nothing was left of the love that brought life to existence, nothing of the wisdom that filled the skies and poured into human hearts. The Earth, destined to be the place of divine gatherings and the vale of joy, was bathed in blood and tears, and envy and violence became its salt.

The divine tears have dried up. The divine call has fallen silent. Praboh was lonely, disgraced, and choked with regret. He cowered and faded, and nothing but sorrow moved the strings of his being.

He craved to hide in the farthest part of the skies, and since the skies are infinite, he will not be at ease for all eternity.

No one feels sorry for him, and no one remembers him.

The first of the gods fell – an eternal outcast. His name was forgotten, and now he is known as the Ancient God.

It is a sad ending for a legend – and even I am sad about it!

Whoever has some humanity left in their heart still shall cry a tear in the name of Praboh!

*The End*