1 The Oakthorn Collective

Change is the essence of the World, of the plane of Mother Gaea; it is her gift to her Children. This you have learned only recently, for you all have changed, as all things must.

Once, you were the pawns and dupes of a pair of Eastern witches who sought to turn you into weapons against the Realm, a weapon called the Claw. At the time, you were young and impressionable, seeking power for its own sake, and the Eastern agitators Ivory and Jade found you easy prey. They intended to turn you into weapons against your own people and your own nation in the war that even now, with the grace of the Goddess, may be coming to a close.

Ivory and Jade were stopped, however, by the appearance of Haggai Nahum, the Son of Lore. They were imprisoned by the Guard, but they had left their scars on you, and Nahum saw that you needed to be retaught and purged of their hatred and dark mgic. Under his tutellage, you have become students of the Blackbriar Tome, the lore of Gaea which is embodied in the World itself. Now, years later, you are attuned to the powers of the World and of the Lord Mishael's sacrifice in the name of His children. Nahum showed you the way of Gaea, and you've come to understand that you are all Gaea's Children, along with every beast of the forest and flower of the field -- now, you are witches of Mishael, well on your way to becoming priestesses of the Goddess herself.

At first, your self-styled Oakthorn Collective consisted of Havilah Jacob, Segwina the mage, and Shelaphi Vellad, as well as Nahum, your teacher. You have on occassion come together, to conduct rituals and celebrate holidays, as well as for the pure value of your friendships. Now, however, you have gathered upon this Castle in response to Gaea's summons, for it seems the time has come to rid the World of intervention by the Great Opposites, and restore the balance that has been broken for centuries, since a portal between the realm of the Lady Tualoha the Creator was created. Perhaps this week you shall have your chance to close this "Creation Gate" for good, and restore balance to Gaea's realm.

Unfortunately, you did not all arrive on the Castle. Whether this greater war between the gods has anything to do with the death of one of your own, you know not -- but Segwina's death shall not go unavenged. Death, like life, is part of the gift of the gods, but murder is a crime most foul. You shall not allow it to go unpunished, unavenged; however, your clues are few. Indeed, they are practically non-existent, save that she was killed by a blow from a blunt heavy weapon, a blow that would not have been fatal had she not been in an extremely stressed and excited state. That is *not* much to go on. Still, the three of you together have many connections and great power, and you will find a way to avenge her death.

The Goddess smiles upon you.

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