

Princess Pie & Immortui Umbra
Two Interwoven Histories of Pursuit
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While the stately Eladrin, clever gnomes and demented Fomorians are certainly the most well-known of the native inhabitants of the Feywild, there are numerous other races including the lively satyrs of the meadows, the pensive dryads of the forests and the pixies, who make homes along wooded rivers where the music of flowing waters, in which they so delight, plays ever present in their ears. The Lords of the Court of Stars find value in all the denizens of the Feywild who choose not to align themselves with evil. This leaves a good many creatures who are at times troublesome but who engage in all manner of pranks due to a mischievous rather than malevolent character. Oh, reader, do not ask me to distinguish a line between mischief and malevolence; only the Lords of the Court of Stars have the power to peer into the hearts of their subjects and discern the nature that lies within. That said, numerous pixies, irksome and frustrating though their race may be, are called to the service of the Court.

Princess Pie, standing one foot tall, though usually found fluttering on gossamer wings at several times that height, was one such pixie who pledged herself to the banner of a Star Lord. What service could a frivolous pixie possibly offer so great a being? In the case of Princess Pie, she possessed the peculiar combination of an impeccable curiosity, a strong memory and a cheering voice. The court knew just what to do with her. A sort of miniaturized hurdy gurdy was bestowed by the Star Lord upon Princess Pie. She gazed at the polished wooden contraption with its crank and wheel and strings with undisguised perplexity. She listened quietly as she was named a Skald, a kind of bard who ventures forth into the worlds, observes, records and, upon return to the Court, renders the most unusual of her findings in song. What need does the stellar aristocracy have for the observations of a pixie? The ways of the Court of Stars are surely far beyond mortal comprehension, but I suppose all layers of bureaucracy suffer moments of heavy boredom and demand respite.

Not surprisingly (for the intuition of Star Lords rarely falls astray) Princess Pie demonstrated an exceptional talent as a Skald. She wandered through the Feywild, accosting strangers and natives alike. Those that chased her away with violent lunges and words met with dirges most sour in the Court of Stars. Those that openly shared their stories with Princess Pie had their tales relayed to the most noble in the land, where their woes were heard and, in some cases, redressed in an instant! So curious was Princess Pie that she lacked discrimination in her choice of subjects. Did she interview goblins? By the hordes she did. Did she waylay a blind Fomorian limping through deeps? Of course, she did. How else would she have sung his sad tale of woe at the court? Did she follow Poison Pie, a wandering Myconid, as he stumbled through the ruins of an abandoned temple hidden among the willows deep in the Murkendraw, wildly chasing something that he apparently called, "An Infinity of Distraction"? Indeed she did and a good thing too; for the Lords of the Court of Stars showed great interest in her lay on the subject. In fact, so keen was their desire to learn more of this arcane topic that, in an unprecedented edict, the Court of Stars sent her forth again to seek out Poison Pie and bring him to audience. Well that particular mushroom man never settled anywhere and was rumored to travel the planes far and wide. When Princess Pie pleaded that she was a Skald and not a tracker, the court dismissed her objection and assured her she could continue to accumulate stories and songs in her journey to find Poison Pie. She was, they recommended, not to return empty-handed.

Princess Pie, a pixie, brave of heart, but at essence a creature of the Feywild, was loath to leave her home but, all the same, set off for the city of Sigil, an interplanar hub of sorts, where portals to all planes could be opened and where, she hoped, word of the itinerant Myconid could be found.

Poison Pie had indeed left the Feywild. Journeying along his helter skelter course, he found himself in the Shadowfell, the World of the Dead. As noted elsewhere Poison Pie maintains a steadfast policy of remembering only the good and forgetting the bad. He says it helps him feel better about himself and who can find fault with logic like that? Nevertheless, something untoward transpired in the Shadowfell. Poison Pie, of course, doesn't remember, or at least claims not to. He long ago left that grim and foreboding underworld; he suffers from a susceptibility to melancholia that threatened to be overwhelmed by the ubiquitous gloom of the Shadowfell. Still, some shred of memory of his passing remained in the Shadowfell and found purchase in a most unfortunate of niches.

Immortui Umbra was not his real name, what mother looks down at her newborn child and says to the father proudly standing beside the bed, "We shall call this one the Shadow that Never Brightens." No, it simply isn't done. With no other evidence at hand, we must assume that Immortui Umbra was a sobriquet bestowed upon that wretch, when it was already well established that he should never again emerge from shadow. In a previous life, Immortui Umbra had been a fey elf and he still retained much of that form. How an Eladrin had come to the perpetual darkness of the Shadowfell was beyond recall, for the being who would become Immortui Umbra had died in the Shadowfell and was raised again by obscene powers with no regard for the well-earned rest of the dead. Indeed, Immortui Umbra was a revenant, dead and yet living. His past was a fog. However, whereas Poison Pie happily discarded his memories as he traipsed through the planes, the life of Immortui Umbra had been torn forcefully from him by whatever power had seen fit to raise him as a revenant. In fact, Immortui Umbra was haunted by the uncertainty of his amnesia and wished for nothing more than to have the knowledge of his former self restored, unless it was perhaps to be granted the permanent oblivion of annihilation.

Immortui Umbra did possess a clear understanding of his present capabilities. As a revenant, he was a warlock, trained in the arcane arts, capable of drawing on the power of the Shadowfell to achieve his desires—except they were not his desires at all, rather those of the unseen patron, guiding him like a marionette, albeit with several broken strings, toward a destiny he simply could not accept as his own. At times, this patron granted Immortui Umbra glimpses of his purpose, of the path ahead, just enough to lead him to the next fight, where Immortui Umbra would wield a dark lightning that smote his foes with a brutality that shocked even himself.

Immortui Umbra possessed a many tailed whip. Black and barbed, the individual tails came alive like snakes when he reared back to strike. This weapon was infused with the essence of the Shadowfell and he was bound to it in a Pact of Gloom beyond his understanding. Indeed, Immortui Umbra understood that he, just as much as this flail in his hand, was an instrument of doom. In moments of solitary silence, Immortui Umbra wondered if he had been raised as a revenant as an act of vengeance; was he to right a terrible wrong done him or someone once dear to him and now long gone? Or, rather, had he tinkered in the dark arts beyond all discretion and was his current state simply a well-deserved curse for past atrocities? Such thoughts brought the revenant neither illumination nor relief.

To complicate matters further, Immortui Umbra harbored an unquenchable hatred for a foe based on a grievance he could not recall. Whatever the origin, Immortui Umbra knew that he was bound to seek out this mortal enemy unto the destruction of one or the other. This nemesis

had left the Shadowfell and Immortui Umbra would follow. The mushroom demon known as Poison Pie would know no sanctuary until a meeting with Immortui Umbra had come to a final resolution. What had Poison Pie done to earn such enmity? A rage without reason, Immortui Umbra was denied the knowledge of the source of his hatred. It brought him no consolation that Poison Pie, as likely as not, had long ago forgotten the source of this animus. It was a vengeance meaningless to all parties, save the patron who drove Immortui Umbra forward and who would not share even a hint of the doom behind it.

When Immortui Umbra came to Sigil, the City of Doors, his discrete inquiries among those parties willing to traffic with a revenant, quickly revealed another in the city seeking the same quarry. Immortui Umbra sought out the pixie, dwarfed in a room at an inn. With a strike of his whip, he shattered the wooden door and strode inside her quarters, fully intending to strip forcefully whatever information the pixie had of Poison Pie.

Immortui Umbra was not prepared for Princess Pie, for she was a Skald of the Lords of the Court of Stars. Walking death, whip of the damned in hand, did not strike fear in her heart. She flitted around the room, demanding to hear the entire story that had brought a revenant to her company. For Immortui Umbra, who was allowed no resistance from the commands of his patron, it seemed a kind of quite rebellion to sit on the side of the bed, while the pixie hovered before him, and relate without pretense or deceit the task before him.

“It’s rich,” cried Princess Pie after the revenant had fallen silent. “You with no memory of why you seek him pursue a Myconid with no memory of you. When you meet, what will either of you do? You will have to introduce yourselves and compare notes in order to determine if you can come to some agreement as to why you should engage in a duel to the death, or in your case a second death!” Princess Pie practically glowed with delight. “Oh, it shall be something to see. I shouldn’t miss it for the world. Wait until I sing of this before the Court of Stars! They shall name me First Bard of the Court.” She turned sternly to Immortui Umbra. “I shall accompany you, for your quest is mine.”

Together, they left Sigil for this terrestrial realm, where they had heard rumor of Poison Pie raising a ruckus of a kind known only to him.