

Greetings, Reverend Mother Thestia,

I'm writing for advice. My flock has been troubled. Strange dreams and stranger rumors. One of them, a normally reliable stevedore called Jakob Allen vanished for some days and came back last Weald day in a bedraggled state. Initially, I thought he had been mugged but there was a wildness to him, a vacancy of the eye and a tremor in his hand that had been entirely absent mere days earlier. He confessed to me that several newcomers to the area had been drinking with him and convinced him to take part in some sort of peculiar ritual. Apparently, this group had been sneaking into the old defiled chapel on a lark... sacrificing goats and chickens and drinking their still warm blood, mutilating the corpses and marking profane symbols with entrails, that sort of thing. Supposedly there was a yellowed scroll which contained various rites. Initially, Jakob felt this seemed to have the air of an elaborate if unsavory prank, but then sinister things started to happen. Chitterings in the darkness and a crawling pressure in his mind. He witnessed something he is unable to recall, and whatever it was warped his personality.

He remembers little beyond chanting as a group holding hands around one of the Thrushmoor standing stones. He claims they were trying to bring someone back from Our Lady's care, a woman called Ariadnah who died over two thousand years ago! I have searched my tomes, but that name is unknown to me. I did examine the Star Stelae when I first came here. There's two of them, ancient beyond measure, but they only radiate a latent magical aura. Quite how they would be used to actually achieve such a monumental feat is beyond me. I'm half-tempted to put this down to too many people smoking something illegal; the town has been awash with narcotics as of late.

Hattingly, Jakob told me that another group of these 'cultists' had a violent disagreement with the group he'd fallen in with over the plan to resurrect this Ariadnah. He didn't quite understand the nature of the disagreement but there was a lot of shouting. Supposedly, a fight ensued at the Old Chapel and there were several fatalities. During the melee, Jakob got scared and ran off and hid under a bush until morning. All this seems rather far-fetched, but I've been hearing other disquieting rumors about people disappearing at night. I asked him where the scroll might have been kept. He claimed it was inside a secret basement under the chapel's altar. I've never heard such a thing, but I suppose I must check. I'll write back soon and let you know what I find.

Yours faithfully,

Trilliss Mavaine