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Directive

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DIRECTIVE

Her lair: landscape of dark wood in a ragged season. At night animal eye and baying of wolf make her brave. Owls glide to their kill. Near the river’s swollen tongue moss caves keep her warm. She sees children bathing in pools. They eat the air. They remain. Their shrill play lets the hounds loose under the roar of timber crackling to the ground. In cellar-holes she finds their abandoned toys. Head out-of-mind she hears the din of skillet and spoon. Once upon a time.

She frowns on the shadow of a thorn, gazes at steel-bright water in the pool—mirrors of coolness. Coolness of spoons. With her deep-sea hands she fingers a stone. It is a bell sharpening the song of dancing children.

“Water,” she whispers. “Water on stones. I am hanged by the roots of my hair.” What nimble terror of play—shadows carved from bone. And it is too far to hear the singing.