

Tales From the Sidhe

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In Loving Memory of Kevin Rice (1953-2006)

<**The Summoner**> *(Quietly at first, wickedly)* Gather round children and **PRICK UP YOUR EARS!**...for tonight is a sacred night and I have a lesson for you. It is a lesson in sadness and despair, anger and horror; a lesson of hope and wisdom. You may call me The Summoner, an outdweller and I come to call the spirits of the departed. For all of you in your masks who came for a spectacle, I bring a show with a few tricks and treats. I have come here to challenge your reason and put thorns under your **precious** feet as you trod this sacred ground. This is the night, when the veil is thin, that you **say** you honor the dead so I summon them to speak to you. Let us now hear what words they would have. I call forth The Spirit of the Forgotten Dead.

Bell rings three times, fire flames and The Spirit of the Forgotten Dead enters

<**Forgotten Dead**> *(Very angrily walking around circle speaking to the crowd)*

I am The Forgotten Dead, spirit of the nameless ancestors. I am the dead you call out to in your rituals. You think you do honor me with your token gestures, but where am I when you sing and dance and feast? **I am nowhere!** I created the roots of all that you are and all that you have and all the world. *(Suddenly grabs someone by the collar)* **What do you know of me?** *(Grabs someone else)* **What do YOU know of me?** There was once a time when my songs were sung at every gathering and every bard worth his salt knew my name and every child asked to hear my stories. **Now I am nothing!** You say you honor the old ways but you **lie**. **Where am I when you sing and dance and feast?**

Spirit of the Forgotten Dead departs

<**The Summoner**> *(Mockingly)* Imagine the ancestors angry at you! Do you not honor them at every rite? Perhaps you use their names for your own amusement and know nothing of their ways. Perhaps it would surprise you that you dishonor the dead in other ways. I call forth The Spirit of the Mourned Dead.

Bell rings three times, fire flames and The Spirit of the Mourned Dead enters

<**Mourned Dead**> *(Sorrowfully, walking around circle speaking to the crowd)*

I am The Mourned Dead. I am the father, the mother, the brother, the sister, the lover and the friend who has recently passed. You think you do honor me by mourning, but where am I when you sing and dance and feast? I am nowhere, you save thoughts of me for the other times. Where once there was only love between us, now there is nothing but sorrow. Once, golden loving rays of warmth shone from you to I. Now there is only sadness. I long to be with you once again as you long to be with me, but now you look to me down the deep well where you have placed me and your tears fall

like steel arrows through my heart. Where am I when you sing and dance and feast?

Spirit of the Mourned Dead departs

<**The Summoner**> (*Mockingly*) Not what you expected, callous ones? Did you think the product of your sorrow was a thing of beauty? Fear not children, there is remedy and why would I torment you without a purpose? (*wicked laugh*) Let us hear from a different side. I call forth The Spirit of the Honored Dead.

Bell rings three times, fire flames and the Spirit of the Honored Dead enters

<**Honored Dead**> (*Walking around circle speaking to the crowd, kindly, jovially, like a favorite uncle*) I am the Honored Dead. I am the one passed on beyond the gates of death, remembered with reverence. You do not cry when you speak of me. No, you do not put me down that well of sorrow. Yet neither am I put down the well of forgetfulness like the forgotten. Where am I when you sing and dance and feast? I am the one in all of your stories.

'A good friend once told me...'

'I remember every summer when I went to visit my grandmother...'

'One Christmas my dad decided that he...'

Laughter. Warmth. Inspiration. These things are like candles at my feet, so take heart when you honor me. Light a candle in remembrance of me and then fill your horn with mead and pass it while you tell my stories. When you sing and dance and feast I will walk beside you. When you tell these stories I live again in your heart and in the hearts of all who hear.

Spirit of the Honored Dead departs

<**The Summoner**> (*sternly*) Let all remember the words of the dead! Let the mourned dead be loved instead of a cause for us to weep, let the forgotten dead be remembered and let all the dead be honored! We thank you, spirits of the dead. You are free to depart us if you will, but you are welcome to join in with us on this, your sacred night. Us you say? (*slowly, threateningly*) Until this night is over I will be with you, haunting your festivities, lest you forget the lesson of The Summoner and the words of the Dead.

Bell rings three times, fire flames, The Summoner departs and the play ends