

Courtesy Preview: The Prophecy
Dragon Queen by Jayel Gibson
Synergy Books November 2007
ISBN: 978-1933538464



“Dust of the earth, ash of the fire, whisper of the wind, tears of the tree.”

It had been foretold in the last days of Men on the dying world known as *Ædracmoræ* that a tree would bring forth a new age, the Age of the Ancients.

The earth lay ashen after the fire of the wars, barren except for one willow tree. Its stout trunk was twisted and gnarled, and pendulous boughs stooped as if to drink. A multitude of braided strands wandered from the crown. Slender branches that had once held tender leaves trailed to the ground, no longer moist and green. Now they were bare, dry and lifeless. Just below the lowest branch of the Tree of Creation, a wort extruded from the bark, scabrous and foul. From the wort fell a teardrop, clear and pure. It traveled down the trunk, in and out among the twisted strands until it reached the base of the tree. As the tear neared the parched soil, a small puff of wind lifted dust and ash, and mingled them with the teardrop of life.

The wind, ash, earth and teardrops formed the body of the first Ancient, and from the first came the six in fulfillment of the Sojourner Alandon's Prophecy of the New Creators.

Broad and stout, born old with the wisdom of the ages, no Ancient was over six hands tall. Weathered and wizened, their leathery skin was the color of poorly tanned hides. It was as dry and cracked as a muddy riverbed too long in the sun. Eyes of brightest obsidian peered out from beneath drooping lids overhung with bushy brows. Wild hair as white as the first fallen snow formed a halo around each face. Their waistcoats and trousers were created from the leaf litter that lay below the tree, and from the roots of the same tree came the staff carried by each Ancient.

They came, seven of them; each created from the other, save the first who was named Willowort. To each one the Tree of Creation breathed a name: Rosewort, Morgwort, Dobbinwort, Brundlewort, Mallowort and Weezelwort.

Head bowed, Willowort waited patiently beside the Tree of Creation. Slowly, over the past ages of sleep time, the Tree had filled her head with prophecies. As the first Ancient, she was the keeper of the Seven Prophecies destined to create the new world under the guidance of the Tree. While the others slept the waiting sleep, wrapped in their gauzy cocoons, Willowort would prepare for their final awakening.

“A place of warmth and beauty, Willow;” called the Tree to Willowort, “with crimson fields and ebony plains, and waterfalls so high; with seas of azure waters, mountains to the north, an icy realm far to the south, and caverns all beneath. Create this place for me. When you have finished, release the beasts to graze and swim and fly. An Ancient will then summon the Guardians to protect the lands and bring about the new Age of Men.

As Willowort listened, she spoke magick to the barren earth, covering it with fields and plains, water and ice, and mountains and caverns. With her final incantations, she set free the beasts to swim and graze and fly before going to the others to lift them from sleep.

They constructed a cluster of small bothies at Meremire at the southeastern edge of the Lake of Lost Memories, and the Ancients then set about preparing for the calling of the Guardians.