

Leigh Green
123 Writer's Way
Writesylvania, WR 12345
(555) 555-555
mlgreen@fullsail.edu

Word Count: 578

The Summoning
by Leigh Green

Every year it was the same story.

"I reserved the camp site."

It didn't matter how much James begged to go to the beach, there was always a ready excuse.

As he sat by the lake on a muggy summer evening on yet another family camping trip, James wondered if he was under a curse.

It wasn't an uncommon plight for servants of the Great Old Ones, after all. He knew what he'd signed on for. Or he knew as much as you could reading a post on some obscure forum by a user named 'ORlyeh?.'

There were other cults he could have joined, but something about the gods of the deep appealed to him. Unfortunately, he was well behind quota on summonings and the curses were his punishment. Surely being kept from the ocean year after year counted as a curse.

The sun was setting, which meant it was time to get to work.

James had to work quickly: his parents would expect him back before too long for the customary s'mores and scary stories.

He set out the candles at five points, lighting each and finishing with the one pointing towards the lake itself. He pulled off his hoodie and replaced it with the robe he had stowed in his backpack.

The candles flickered to life, casting James in undulating shadows as he began the incantation. He stumbled over the pronunciation a few times, but soon enough the surface of the lake began to froth and bubble. The ripples in the surface disrupt the reflection of the moon; breaking it apart until its shape was no longer visible.

James felt a surge of power course through him as he sounded the final syllables. The moon, hanging low in the sky, seemed to brighten for a second before going dark as if a cloud had passed over it. A sharp wind coursed by, snuffing the candles at his feet. The turbulent waters hit a fever pitch just before a writhing mass of tentacles broke the surface. James watched, his features taking on an expression both hopeful and excited.

But James' face fell as the creature rose from the surface of the water and slithered to shore. For all its many tentacles and their razor-sharp suckers, the body of the demon was relatively small. It had a multitude of eyes facing all directions and a beak-like mouth.

"You look like a squid that came out of a chemical spill."

James' words were glum and unimpressed. He stared down at the result of his summoning for some time before crouching down before it. The cephalopod made a noise; more accurately, it gurgled. Despite himself, James smiled.

"The Masters won't be happy with us you know."

The creature gurgled again, waving a few of its tentacles.

As he got to his feet, James looked off into the trees, toward the orange glimmer of the fire at his family's camp site. They would be expecting him back soon.

"Alright," he said, turning back to the summoned horror. "You need to go cause some chaos. Go... do whatever it is you do, but don't let me see you again. Got it?"

The creature gurgled once again and James took it as an affirmative. He watched as it went swimming across the lake. Once it disappeared from view, he stripped off his robe and packed everything up.

On his way back to his family, James could hear the screams of the beast's victims.