

The Legend of Silver Alice

This particular rural legend shows up in a remarkable number of places. It goes like this: there once was a Human (or Elf, or Dwarf, or Orc) maiden who was cursed by an evil Gnomish (it's always Gnomish, for some reason) wizard after she spurned his advances. In his rage he turned her into living silver; worse, as her skin tarnished, it also brought her great pain. Only poultices of gold and pearls could soothe her agony, and then only for a time. Silver Alice now lives in an sea-facing grotto, where she sieves the sea itself for gold, and watches over great beds of pearl oysters, all the while weeping tears of pure silver into the lapping waves.

If you find one of her Tarnished Tears, you can use it to find Silver Alice, and -- well, the legend doesn't really go on for much, after that. Of course, most of the people it's aimed at visibly check out after they hear the phrase 'poultices of gold and pearls,' anyway. And make no mistake; the legend is deliberately aimed at certain people. Adventurers with more greed than sense, to be precise. Greedy enough, in fact, that they've already gotten in serious trouble with various authorities over their acquisitional habits. And sometimes those authorities are

willing to use a specialist to resolve whatever outstanding issues they might be having.

Yes. Silver Alice is a bounty hunter. Or maybe a bounty trapper.

She **is** made out of silver. Alice is in fact a Silver Elemental, which means that she has silver blood, sinews, bones, and so forth. She can also change her height and appearance, which is why there are so many different versions of her legend. The Gnomish wizard is completely made up, of course; he's there to add justification for Silver Alice living out on the seashore by herself, patiently waiting for greedy individuals who have gotten hold of one of her Tarnished Tears to wander on in.

What happens then depends on the individual. Silver Alice keeps a list of people with bounties on them; if a visitor is on that list, she knocks him out and sends a message to the relative authority. If a visitor is not on that list, she knocks him out anyway and sees if he has any enemies who would pay for him. If there aren't, she'll cloud his memory of the encounter and dump him somewhere remote, minus the Tarnished Tear. Alice isn't in the murder business, or even the thief business; she also won't hand over anybody to an individual or group who is actually vile.

All of this assumes that Silver Alice -- who is, after all, a powerful elemental -- thinks that she can take her target. If she can't, Alice will readily enough switch gears. After all, she usually has an ensorcelled individual or two who either needs to be handed over to the relevant authorities, or else left in a wood somewhere. Mutually-agreeable arrangements can be made; after all, Silver Alice has plenty of money.

And why does a Silver Elemental need money, anyway? Well, books cost money. And music, nice clothes, gimcracks, food and drink (she can still enjoy the taste), furniture, retirement-suitable real estate, and of course a steady diet of silver. The stuff's a precious metal on this plane of existence, after all.

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