

up to its entrance is a young girl, about twelve, playing in the square. She seems to be drawing something in the dust with her bare foot.

We edge forward to try to see what it is. It is a sign, made up of two Greek letters, one shaped like a modern *p*, the other like an *x*. It is the Chi-Rho sign. Having drawn it, conscious of our gaze, she does a little running dance, leaving the prints of her bare feet in the dust of the square. The tracks leave a wavy serpentine trail and then, approaching the center of the square, she turns sharply and bangs her heel firmly upon the ground. At this there arises all about her and around us a cloud of dust in which it is difficult to see anything but vague shapes.

As the dust cloud soon subsides we see that we have been joined by a group of men. They are elderly and carry staffs of office. There are twelve of them and they form a ring about the girl, who remains standing at the center of their circle.

A bearded priest appears at the entrance of the temple and descends halfway down the steps. He seems to be about to conduct a ceremony with the men and the girl. We also notice an elderly woman who has approached from a side street and who now stands looking on, beneath a tree that grows by the side of the square. We realize that she and the priest upon the steps are mother and father of the girl, whom they have apparently begotten in the evening of their years.

We look round again at the circle of elders and now notice the tops of their staffs. Each is carved in the form of an animal or a human effigy, and we realize that they represent signs of the zodiac. There is a ram, a bull, a pair of twins, a crab, a lion, a virgin, a pair of scales, a scorpion, a centaur, a goat, a man carrying a water pot, and a pair of fish.

As we look on, the priest on the temple steps raises his arms in prayer and supplication. A sudden wind whips round the square, raising the dust again and shaking the branches of the tree under which the old woman sits. It forms a kind of spiral dust whorl about the girl and the men, and at its passing, as the dust settles again, we see, to the amazement of all, that the rod of the elder with the staff representing Aquarius, the water bearer, has burst forth into green life and is thick with blossom from top to tip.

He goes forward and embraces the maiden in the center and the other elders disperse. As they do so we become aware of a pair of pillars that appear on either side of the maiden, and just beyond them a spinning wheel.

The remaining elder, the priest, and the old woman beneath the tree are forgotten as we focus our attention upon the girl, who now sits behind the pillars, at the spinning wheel. She sits on a three-legged stool that rests