

There is a book in this world...no, scratch that. There exists in this world *The Book*, a tome older than any material has a right to be, and inside this Book lies the Truth of Reality. I speak neither of a great work of mathematics, nor philosophy, nor even of sorcery. Nay, it is a chronicle of history penned in a time when the gods themselves walked among us. The few who know of The Book's existence believe to their – our – very core that it was written by one of those very same gods – or celestials, as they called themselves. I have translated what I was able during my short time with it. The only significant deed of my life lies in the few pages which follow.

This is the Truth of Reality.

*Raonall Fathunn*

This plane is the embodiment of balanced duality; the depth of suffering possible buoyed just so by the heights of unfettered joy. A constant mix of those opposing ideals intertwines in a causal relationship whose beauty almost wholly escapes me. I suppose that is why so many of us were drawn to this realm. Conflict such as is commonplace here does not occur on the Celestial Plane, yet, to our own surprise, we celestials became subject to the same desires as true corporeal denizens. Some of them very dark. Also like the denizens of this plane, some among us place the good of the many over the desires of the self. Fighting amongst ourselves was a foregone conclusion. If only we had realized the extent.

I suppose some exposition is in order. Allow me to draw parallels with something you may find more familiar: most corporeal religions are a balancing act between two underpinning precepts. First, that this is a karmic universe and your deeds in each life directly determine your birth in the next. Second, that the realm of the gods – the Celestial Plane – is populated by superior beings with direct power over the corporeal. The first is unequivocally true. The second, while in some ways accurate, is complicated to such a degree that not even the wisest of our number fully understand that relationship.

The basic karmic incarnations are spread across three planes which orbit each other in close relation. The Corporeal Plane you need no explanation on. We will get to the Celestial. Always in between our two planes acting as something of a buffer is the loosely bound congregation of existences known as the Ethereal Plane. It is contact with those ethereal existences directly bordering your own which spawned most of your lower echelon folklore – fairies, imps, and the like. To our side are the hell realms, infinite in the nature of applicably torturous relative eternities they cater to.

In many ways, the Celestial Plane is more akin to the ethereal than to your own realm in its makeup. There are many, many minor heavens for beings which have earned an incarnation in one of those variably ever- pleasant realms. Those religions which speak of living alongside their gods are only correct in the vaguest sense, much as your planet lives alongside its sun.

The point is that the orbit of these three planes is uneven. Why, not even the wisest and eldest of the celestials can are certain – though most will elaborate upon theory with the slightest provocation. Regardless of the forces driving it, the orbit came around in such a way that the metaphysical veil separating our planes became increasingly easy to breach. This is where the second ideal of corporeal religion gets complicated. We are avatars of the corporeal, just as the corporeal is a reflection of us: the orbit is what determines dominance.

Celestials are not born, per se, we exist because we must – karma dictates it. We are gifted with knowledge appropriate for our incarnation and tossed into the world as what humans would liken to a preteen. Family is a nebulous thing, though those bonds do exist in a literal form. And so, there is no traditional process of growing and being educated in the ways of things and far- flung histories of existence. Though on your plane this text will survive beyond the lifespan of any or all of the Peak Evolved Races present now – Humans, Dwarves, Elves, *Bocain* (translation- 'Hobgoblins' – common children's story monster), and *Famhean* (Giants – *translator: That makes two extinct races.*) – on ours it would last but a few generations.

As such, while civilizations do not rise and fall on our plane, knowledge falls out of existence in much the same manner. As far as we celestials were concerned, the little sway we had upon your plane was what had always been. Some had much, many had none. When the planes drew close enough to each other that a Celestial could cross with ease...for a number, the temptation proved too great. Once on the Corporeal Plane they found themselves as powerful as the very gods the Evolved Races took them to be.

Too late, many among us noticed the unsavory mantles some of our brethren had taken up: *Beud*, God of Harm; *Balgair* the Fox, Trickster God; *Fiar*, Goddess of Thievery; *Tioaich*, Goddess of Sorrow. In response rose: *Treabhachas*, God of Bountiful Harvests; *Briodal*, Goddess of Love; *Teomachd*, God of Skill and Expertness. From there the numbers began to spiral out of control. War was inevitable. It was also quick. And then there were three. The only celestials who had claimed no corporeal god's identity for their own.

I am The Watcher; I shall be witness to the results of celestial hubris. My duty is to make every effort in ensuring these mistakes are not made again. *Mosach*...well, the name he chose in your common tongue says everything, does it not? (trans- *Mosach* – nasty, filthy, sordid, mean) It was he who acted as catalyst to our downfall, so filled has he become with his lust for power. The orbit is widening, you see, the veil thickening at a much greater pace than it thinned. I believe that the shock of so many celestials dying by violence is forcing the planes back apart. No reinforcements are coming for either side and before long we may even lose the ability to return home.

*Treunas* is the only thing standing between *Mosach* and the power to bend this entire plane to his will – and his will alone – for the remainder of his lifespan. Which is upwards of thirty thousand cycles. It is even possible that having such a twisted creature wielding such authority in this plane could...well...theoretically, the whole thing could devolve into a hell realm. If enough... *wrong*...happens in this plane the universe will compensate by shunting your world to the far side of the Ethereal Plane and simply shift something else to fill your plane's karmic station.

The shockwaves of celestial violence pushing our planes apart are not simply thickening the veil, they are wounding it. It is the scars from these wounds which I believe is causing the separation to increase so rapidly. That scarring will most likely manifest in planar isolation. What that means is that the souls of the Corporeal Plane will, for the most part, be bent to the twisted nature of their surroundings. Force people to lie, cheat, steal, and kill for survival and that is exactly what they will do. Everyone goes down with the ship. Or, to hell along with the hand- basket, if you prefer.

*Treunas* and I crossed to this plane rather late in the game, in fact were the last to do so. He is a singular creature. None are certain of exactly what he is an avatar, but the going theory is a collection of noble and superior traits from amongst the Corporeal Evolved. The civilizations he has had contact with have unfailingly agreed to the name by which I call him, gifting those domains unto him. I see no cause to argue. (trans- *Treun* – brave, bold, valiant; *Treunas* – strength, power)

A sidenote: the other stars and planetary bodies which can be seen in the skies are beyond celestial knowledge. They are not visible from our plane, nor accessible through the veil. I believe the Corporeal Plane includes a window into the true nature of the universe, just as its Evolved Races have the most potential to rise or fall karmically. Nirvana is almost totally exclusive to corporeal incarnation, as one cannot remove oneself from the trappings of existence without first being subject to its most potent form – the corporeal.

The focus of every Celestial to cross the veil, from the start, has for some indistinguishable reason been the smallest continent of the five on this planet. Also strange is the concentration of racial diversity here. As large as they are, the other four contain only two or three of the Peak Evolved Races and one, maybe two of the Evolving Races – Ogres, Trolls, Furbolgs, Kobolds, etc – but the Small Continent bears them all. While I know not why this continent is a focal point for the Corporeal Plane, neither do I wish to make any attempt to deny that fact.

*Treunas* never maintained a great deal of interest in the corporeal, even after dozens of celestials made the Crossing. When his younger sister joined their number and became *Feile*, Goddess of Generosity, he barely took notice. When the first of our number died a violent death, his attention became rapt. While others proceeded to panic he sat back and waited to see what would come of it. When he was not Viewing, I was. In truth, even when he was gazing across the veil I generally was as well – that's why I am called Watcher it is my talent. I can Remote View several places in the Corporeal Plane simultaneously.

When *Balgair* first seduced *Feile*, her brother became wroth, yet was disinclined to intervene. It was not his business. When his sister was murdered, however, that ceased to be the case and we began preparations for our Crossing. What we were unaware of was that *Mosach* had been in a constant state of manipulation for over a century while our attention was elsewhere. Every unpleasant god which had taken residence in the Corporeal Plane had long before fallen under the sway of his planning. When *FiarandBeud* helped the Fox to slay *Feile*, they were intentionally sparking open war among the celestials at *Mosach's* bidding.

And, of course, the nations beholden to them went to war with one another. Which, unfortunately, was not contained only to the Small Continent. All over the world people warred in honor of the new rivalries among their gods. *Treunas* had had enough; the time to act was quickly passing us by. But, the orbit had already begun to react and the Council of the Eldest believed the universe should be left to right itself. They directly forbade any further interference. So we came alone, but too late and too few to save the lives of the faithful celestials. It has been all *Treunas* can do just to whittle the Dark Gods down to *Mosach* alone. Which, I suppose I should tell you about ne-

*Translator:* Sorry, I went back and copied the beginning second and this was as much as I could get before...before my time with The Book was up. What I copied first was the last of it, the culmination of the War of Gods. It chronicles the final moments of the Age of Gods itself! Which, at the time of my transcription, was over twelve eons ago. Forty- four thousand years. Hells, it took more than half that for the continent to recover and begin its ascent into the current Imperial Age. And not one of the Seven Empires has existed for half of *that*.