

The Books Of Tomorrow

Book I: The Beginning

The God Malawirel went mad. With rage unfettered he tore at the very fabric of the universe, unmaking his and his Siblings' greatest works. Worlds crumbled. Stars collapsed. The Laws laid forth at the beginning of creation were negated.

The other gods, being slow to rouse from their oblivious sleep, did nothing. However, The Three Goddesses, who were the least of the gods and were charged with watching the whole of creation, soon discovered Malawirel's madness and met to decide what must be done.

They were forced to act quickly when their chosen world, Bralius, was threatened by the Mad God. Gathering all they could in the short time they had, the goddesses ushered the population into the Ovum, the space between spaces where the creatures that ruled in the infancy of creation were banished.

They then set a trap for Malawirel that severely weakened him for the few moments it took him to consume Bralius. It was then they struck and killed Malawirel. They then used their power to form his body into a new world. They named this new planet Laun and gave it as a gift to the refugees of Bralius and the handful of plants and creatures they had rescued from the fragments of innumerable dead worlds.

The journey through the Ovum was not without price. Though none who had entered had aged a day, weary centuries had passed for the travelers and much which they had known had been lost. That which was contained in the Ovum stalked and killed many, while others just disappeared or went mad. Less than a third of those that began the journey emerged onto Laun.

As the people settled on Laun, the goddesses performed their final acts. First they formed a moon from the remnants of Bralius and deposited on it all of their people's lost lore and technology. They then placed a gateway to the moon and hid it so that only when the people of Laun reached a moment of perfection could they reach their old home.

Then the goddesses dealt with the larger problem. Nothing had ever killed a god before. Some had disappeared and other were banished to the Ovum, but none had ever been killed. Not even the goddesses knew if Malawirel was truly dead. To ensure that the Mad God could never again spread destruction, The Three Goddesses made their final sacrifice. Focusing their very essences, they wrapped their energies around the dead god's body, forming a barrier which would always hold him. This invisible energy field became known as the Trinaura.

The sacrifice doomed the goddesses. Their powerless bodies were drawn into the Ovum by the very creatures they once exiled there. Within that cold place, they were corrupted. Their true names can never again be spoken. lest we, their very people, draw their malevolent attention.

Book II: A Brief History of Laun

With the will of their doomed gods protecting them, the people of Bralius prospered on their new home. They arrived with little besides the will to survive, but it was not long before they had constructed their first city, Irone. As the decades passed, civilization slowly advanced and other cities began appearing in the fertile land. It wasn't long before explorers, and then settlers, were traveling the seas to distant lands.

This peaceful period of expansion could only last so long. When Pantrus I, then King of Irone, witnessed the riches of the port city of Molese growing more vast than his own he launched a viscous attack and conquered the city. Thus began The Annexation Wars which quickly spread across the continent of Orulon. After 400 years of bitter war, King Caelis IV or Irone crowned himself Emperor of the Ironian Empire. Save a few pocket of resistance, all Orulon was his.

During the Annexation Wars, the wayward colonies and settlements were all but forgotten. With their new independence, these cities grew into countries and nations. Some fought their own wars while others dwelt in peace, seeking knowledge among the many and varied lands. The one thing they all had in common was their love for their new independence.

It did not take long for the Ironian Empire to consolidate its power. Within the span of three Emperors the chaotic and war-torn provinces were rebuilt and retooled to support the Imperial machine. A parliament was created and filled with nobles from each province in order to let the Emperor know the needs of his people. Slavery, a common practice since the birth of cities, became an Imperial mandate in order to insure that labor was both cheap and plentiful.

Life in the Empire was fairly good if you weren't a slave...food was plentiful, disease was less frequent, and banditry was all but eliminated by Imperial patrols. Nobles and the rich led heady, decadent lifestyles filled with fine foods, opulent goods, and rich drinks.

And so, 700 years after the beginning of the Annexation Wars, the Ironian Empire turned its attention to its abandoned colonies. Scouting parties were sent far and wide, but attempts at diplomacy almost completely failed, as few of the colonies wanted to be back under the iron boot of the Empire. In response the war furnaces were ignited, soldiers were mustered, and entire fleets were built on all coasts of the as the Empire prepared for conquest. The Empire was confident that this war would be over quickly once the Free Lands witnessed the power of the army, the power of their navy, and the power of their newfound weapon...sorcery.

The Free Lands would have been crushed quickly indeed had the Ironian Empire taken its time and attacked each land in turn with great force. So confident were they, however, that they spread themselves too thin. Their initial invasion gave them footholds in many of the lands and from there they launched their assaults on the strongholds of the

colonists. The first met success, but soon the supply lines could not support their efforts. The fighting eventually reached a stalemate: the Ironians could push no further and the Free Lands could not completely oust the invaders. The Ironians moved fast to better manage their logistics and turned the captured cities into fortresses. Those they captured were sent back to Orulon as slaves. After years of intense fighting along the newly drawn borders, the Free Lands finally gained the upper hand...they had learned the secrets of sorcery from a captured Ironian. Led by the charismatic hero, Nisius, the nation of Pravono first drove out the Ironians from his lands. Soon, they were being defeated across the globe until they were forced to return to Orulon. Thus ended the War of Refusal.

The next century and a half were relatively peaceful as the Free Lands rebuilt and flourished. Great works were done across the globe as the art of sorcery was mastered and put to use. Still wary of the Empire, many cities and nations banded into confederations for their mutual protection.

When the Ironians returned, the very heavens shook. Huge armies equipped with strange siege weapons and flying navies assaulted the Free Lands in a lightning strike. Within weeks they had many of the smaller nations under their control. Within months, even the largest of confederations were under siege and struggling for their very survival. The Ironians were unstoppable.

The Empire would have stood victorious too, if not for The Great Retreat.

Book III: The Great Retreat

It was in the era of peace between the First and Second War of Refusal that the anomalies began. The first signs of trouble were subtle: snowstorms in midsummer, rain that would last for weeks, frequent cyclones, etc. Then the quakes began. First tremors and then progressively larger earthquakes rocked the lands far and wide. The chaotic weather and the frequent tremors led to the death of entire cities.

It was at the first battle of the Second War of Refusal that the worst was made known...Horrors were being unleashed into the world. These Creatures That Should Not Have Been were born in the Ovum and were composed of pure malevolence. Our very fears were their sole sustenance, and they fed well. Encounters with Horrors were rare at the beginning of the war but their menace grew with the passing months.

After much study, the sage Marcelin of Irone realized that the imbalance that brought forth this "Scourge" would first become far worse, but should eventually reach a crescendo and then equilibrium. His studies also revealed that Horrors were unable to pass through True Earth. Planning for an uncertain future, Marcelin devised a great underground retreat that would last for centuries. Being a benevolent man, Marcelin spread his message even to the Free Lands in the hope of preserving the knowledge and lives of all peoples. For this treason he was put to death.

Across the land sorcerers used their immense power to carve underground homes for each city, town, and village that heeded the advice of Marcelin. Sages taught communities how to survive underground and constructed artifacts that would shed light from darkness and pull water from deep within the earth. Each of these Cairns was also given a device that could let them gauge when it was safe to return to the world above.

In the City of Kolvar the Books of Tomorrow were penned and sent to each Cairn. These books, which you are now reading, contain the history of the people of Laun and a collection of skills and knowledge that was deemed to be important to be forgotten.

The world declined.

So began the Great Retreat.

Book IV: Sorcery

The last gift of the goddesses was not fully realized until 1512 N.E. when Heldevance of Agnete first experienced the Rapture. From there it did not take long for the basic tenants of Sorcery to be mastered.

The sorcerous gift is a rare thing, blessing only one in as many as one hundred thousand people. The gift allows a man to tap and channel the Trinaura and to weave its power into spells that can do marvelous and terrible things. Once their talent has matured, a Sorcerer is a force to be reckoned with. This author herself has seen the full power of channeling unleashed ---- cities constructed with but a thought, mountains moved with the no more than a look, armies crushed with a flick of the wrist, and the very stars pulled from the sky with a whisper.

To channel, a sorcerer must first focus and bring himself into a state of peace. To channel while angry or excited puts the sorcerer and those around him in great danger. Once this emotional state has been achieved, the sorcerer opens himself to the world around him and allows the power of the Trinaura to fill him. Sorcerers report this is akin to drinking from the font of life...every feeling, every sensation is magnified a million times. In this state they can actually see the hypnotic slow of the Trinaura high above the earth. They can also see the brilliant glow of the Trinaura filling others who are channeling. This blissful state has claimed hundreds of weak-willed individuals as they die of thirst or starvation while refusing to relinquish the power of the gods. This state is referred to as the Rapture.

While Enraptured, the sorcerer may weave together threads of power to form spells. This tapestry of light is obvious to anyone nearby who is also Enraptured, thus spells can be learned by watching others weave the tapestry of the spell.

Those schooled in the lore of sorcery report that magic relies heavily on patterns. Every object forms a True Pattern based on its history which, in humans, results in a True Name, the name of that person's soul. By studying and becoming familiar with a person or object, their True Pattern will slowly become evident. If a True Pattern is woven into a spell it makes that object or person much more susceptible to that spell's effects.

Book V: Religion

Given the unique circumstances of our history, we people of Laun had a theological debacle to work our way through once we settled here. The goddesses we once worshipped were dead and corrupted while the other gods were distant and asleep.

In the earliest years the people gave praise and worship to Laun itself in the memory of The Three Goddesses. As years passed and the memory of the gods' apathy lost its sting, the people turned back to worshipping the ideals the gods stood and thus worshipped the gods themselves. This was not a loving worship, but a practical one. It is often said: "Appease the gods, live long and happily."

The biggest change in religion is when Emperor Ulfonius II deified himself and the whole line of Emperors in 1357 N.E. The worship of any other being was strictly outlawed upon penalty of torture and death. While many of the Free Lands scoffed at this, the vast majority of the Empire, which was enjoying immense prosperity at the time, became believers in the divinity of their leader. They attributed the success of the Empire as a whole to the omnipotent power of the Emperor.

Cults are not terribly common, but do rear their head at times. Devotees to the Three Goddesses and Malawirel seem the most common, but do not tend to be actively harmful, just misguided. Once discovered though, they are hunted down mercilessly.

And yet others pay tribute to the Horrors of the Ovum, seeking to unleash them on Laun with the hope of gaining great power in return. Thrice it has been recorded that an individual or cult was powerful enough to actually summon forth the starspawn from between worlds.

While religion is upheld in society, it does not play as big a role on the lives of the Free People as it did in the past. They have little trust for the gods and most only seek not to suffer ill will from them. In the Empire however, religion is one of the most important aspects of society and a major factor in the lives of the people.

Below is a listing of some of the known and more popular gods:

Vannains Whose Whims Are Law

Adrydel Who Drums Fear In Children

Massaloc Whom The Harvest Grows To Please

Hercalmus Who Watches Travelers With a Loving Eye and a Wicked Eye

Liastor Who Guides The Stars

Ylan Whose Strength Snaps The Bones of the Unjust

Escaronwy From Whom Knowledge Springs

Nisiriae Who Watches