

RE: DEITY - THE BREATH OF CREATION

1.11 Sun and Shadow

Reincarnation was a tricky thing to manage, in Alexander's opinion. He was eternally grateful for the chance to test his system with the various flora and fauna of the Four Realms before the Fae were introduced, because, simple as those souls might be in comparison, they still accrued karma through their actions and reincarnated all the same. Things felt easier with them because of their simplicity. Not so much with the Fae.

"This soul doesn't even want to go to the Heaven Realm," he muttered, observing the soul of one particular Fae with enough good karma accrued to reincarnate into the Heaven Realm as it reentered the Spirit River and flowed toward the Karmic Realm. Father had spread a few tribes of Fae in the Heaven Realm, to start filling it with people. They didn't exclusively have good karma but were also those willing to put in the work to *be* good – or needing heavy exposure to that kind of energy. It was meant to be a reward and a goalpost, after all.

So why didn't many souls want to go there?

As Father would say, he supposed, mortals would be mortals. The one he'd been watching in particular was likely to refuse reincarnation to the Heaven Realm despite the offer, instead opting to stay in the physical. It was an...odd choice, in Alexander's opinion, but one he nonetheless understood. The soul was a protective sort, and would like to continue to build itself and others up. And while mortals often believed that reincarnation was random or they had no say in it, that was entirely untrue. Reincarnation was a mechanism to lift souls up through repeating cycles. As such, a soul's personal goals and opinions were taken into account.

"Those karmic kings of Keilan's should listen to their request..." he mused aloud, letting the current of the spiritual river, the flow of souls that passed through the Spirit Realm, carry him along. It was an enjoyable experience, to just...observe. So he followed the soul all the way to the Karmic Realm, where the spirit river spilled out into the karmic valley and Keilan's karmic kings – spirits, highly attuned to karma and given great authority when it comes to such matters – started to issue changes.

It was at this point that Alexander stopped paying attention to the individual soul, and instead focused on the Karmic Realm. Of all the Realms, the appearance of Fae had changed this one the most; and no Fae even lived here!

The Karmic Valley now had a few dozen temples built into the sides, stone things where karmic kings resided when they weren't assisting in matters of

karma. Along the valley floor souls of all sorts filed along, heading to the great black palace at the far end. As far as he was aware, Keilan rarely presided over the actual processes, preferring to oversee the entirety of the operation and make sure it was running smoothly. *We haven't chatted in a while.* Alexander thought. *I wonder what he is up to?*

As if sensing his thoughts, said Karmic Deity floated up from his palace and flew over to where Alexander sat with lazy flaps of his great, leathery wings.

"What do you think?" his brother asked.

"Seems to be running smoothly." Alexander replied, nodding his head.

"Mother helped me with most of it," he admitted freely. "We'll need to separate some of the lines out between mortal souls and beast or plant souls eventually, but for now it can be done in one lump."

"What do you do with the memories?" Alexander asked suddenly, the question having bugged him for a while now. He knew Father requested that the memories of souls be scrubbed from their conscious mind and saved somewhere else, but wasn't sure of the exact details.

“We have an archive beneath my palace. Although something curious is happening in the ocean outside the valley,” he said, pointing away from the valley, and to the great black ocean that surrounded it, kept at bay by a wall of bare, rocky mountains ringing the valley proper. “Memories of the entire universe have started to appear there. Ruins on the ocean floor, flashes of the past visible in the depths. I’ve come to start calling it the Sea of Memories. Some souls, while waiting for the right time to reincarnate, have taken to boating across the ocean.”

“Fascinating,” Alexander rumbled, soaking it all in. Keilan let him enjoy the silence, though he could tell his brother was itching to say something by the way his wings and tail fidgeted. He shot his normally composed brother a sidelong glance, and sighed, knowing what he wanted to ask. “Go ahead. You, Elvira, and Reika should go show Father what you made. Mine will still take some time.”

“Are you sure? We’re willing to wait for you.” Keilan asked. Alexander chuckled.

“I am sure. Father will understand. Go, please, your fidgeting is annoying me,” he said humorously. Keilan cracked a smile and patted Alexander on the head, earning himself a good-natured scowl from the dragon as he floated off into the sky. “Oh, and take the two new gods with you! They should be born by the time you gather the others!”

“Will do! Thank you, brother!” Keilan called back, and promptly vanished from sight. Alexander chuckled to himself and went back to observing the Karmic Realm, and how souls grew. If he wanted his own People to be what they were meant to be, what he knew they could be, their souls had to grow to fit their bodies first. The question was how to inspire such growth?

I woke with a start, the various incarnations I had running around the Four Realms while my main body amassed power vanishing in an instant. With a groan I stretched and yawned, back popping in multiple places as I stood from my mediation chamber. The memories and experiences of my divine incarnations – of which I could only keep ten running at any sufficient capacity without losing control – were still fresh in my mind. Some weren’t much fun. Some were quite entertaining – I’d gone boating with Keilan in the Karmic Realm! The Sea of Memories was very cool.

“Marm,” Randus said, standing before me the moment I opened my eyes.

“Yes? Wait – I feel something.” I muttered. I hadn’t amassed even close to the amount of power I needed to for my next project, so what had woken me up? Still a little groggy as I was, I couldn’t quite place it. That was irritating. I scowled. There was still another century to go before I planned to wake up again.

“Reika, Keilan, and Elvira are here to see you. They brought some newborn deities.” Randus said simply. I nodded absently, pinching the bridge of my nose. Something was fogging my mind. I needed tea. Almost as soon as I thought that Randus produced a small cup of tea for me, still steaming hot, and I flashed him a smile as I took it.

“Send them in,” I said, taking a sip and smoothing out my robes, sitting back down in my spot. Randus bowed and promptly disappeared. It took a monumental effort of will to keep my divine sense in check. Whatever this was felt like a surprise, and I didn’t want to spoil it by seeing what was coming first. Instead, I focused on my surroundings.

The meditation chamber hadn’t changed much since I’d last gone to sleep. Randus sometimes liked to mess with me and move things around, so I always checked. The stone beneath me glowed with white power, reacting to the small core of energy I was amassing within myself. Intricate ritual designs marked the grey stone floors around the stone slab I sat on, while tapestries and other artworks hung from the walls. Many had been made for me by spirits and even some of the gods, and now hung proudly for me and everyone else to enjoy.

With a groan the wooden doors to my meditation chamber opened, revealing my children and two newcomers – the sight of whom immediately made me light up in joy.

“Well, well, well, it seems you’ve been busy while I’ve been mediating!” I said, clapping my hands and standing.

“Father,” Elvira said, bowing.

“Mother,” Reika and Keilan echoed, bowing and nodding respectively.

“We’ve brought two new deities to be named by you, as well as...something else,” Reika said, a mischievous glimmer in her eyes. I raised an eyebrow at her and stepped forward, focusing entirely on the two new gods.

One was a dark-looking man with sunken cheeks and pale skin. Black robes were draped about his form as he kneeled before me, his midnight-black hair radiating mist that pooled on the floor around him. It was fairly easy to guess what his domain was. The other, however, needed no guess.

“Sol, it’s about time you made a body for yourself. You’ve been ready for centuries! It’s good to finally see you out here, joining your fellow gods!” I said, wrapping the freshly-born sun god in a hug. I’d already decided on his name eons ago. The golden-haired man, clad in robes of red and orange, fluctuating like the sun he presided over, laughed and hugged me back. I pulled away from him, looking him up and down. He was positively *radiant*. Heh. Puns.

Although...he clearly hadn’t listened to me when I talked to him about focusing too much on one thing. His divine domain, his energy, felt far too focused on the radiance and heat of the Sun. I was already pretty much convinced that a Lunar Star was needed to balance out the Realm Sun, but Sol’s stubbornness only sealed the deal.

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“It is a pleasure to actually meet you, Your Majesty,” Sol replied, bowing deferentially. “I thought it would be a good time to get out and walk around, see things up close for once.”

“I am glad.” I said, clapping him on the shoulder with a smile. Though I didn’t know how to feel about him calling me “Your Majesty.” That felt wrong. With a mental shrug I turned toward the other god, who was an equal in power to Sol just in a different way. My smile grew as I looked at him. “You can’t have light

without dark, huh?" I mused, squatting next to the kneeling man. He looked up at me as I did so, clearly a little confused.

"Rise, little one, there is no need to bow to me. Let me have a look at you." I urged. The man nodded, his pitch-black eyes meeting my own as he followed me to my feet. This was a deity of darkness and shadows – that did not mean evil, but just...hidden. Perhaps, without a moon or Lunar Star to balance out the Sun it was only a matter of time before a deity of shadows appeared. Or perhaps it was predestined from the moment I created light. Either way, I spent my time studying him.

To his credit, not once did he flinch under my gaze. But he was not the thing I was looking for, that niggled my thoughts and danced about in the corners of my vision. He was just of shadows, not the Shadow –

"Gilles." I decided, laying a hand on his shoulder. "Your name will be Gilles." He silently bowed his head, taking a step back to stand behind Elvira, who nodded to him encouragingly. I raised a mental eyebrow at that little exchange, but let it slide as I spread my arms grandly. "Welcome to the Four Realms, you two! Many great changes are coming our way, and you arrived just in time to help! But before I put you to work, please, go explore a bit. Get to know your fellow gods, observe some mortals, get used to life. And if you have any questions or just want to talk, please, drop by any time." I said. Gilles took that as the dismissal it was and promptly faded back into the shadows, vanishing entirely, while Sol just nodded his head and stretched.

“I should go take a look,” he agreed. “I’ve spent too long observing from a distance. Your Majesty.” And with that he, too, shot off through my palace on a ray of light. I watched him go then turned curiously to the other three.

“Ok, that is usually Alexander’s thing, to bring newborn deities to be named. What’s going on here? What are you up to?” I all but demanded. Reika’s smile widened, that mischievous look in her eye only increasing in intensity.

“Alexander isn’t quite done yet, and my other two siblings couldn’t bear to wait any longer so we decided to show you something we’ve been working on. Right?” She said, drawing out the words slowly as if to increase the anticipation. I wasn’t really in the mood for games, wanting and needing to get back to work – the Four Realms being unbalanced was starting to feel like an itch I just couldn’t scratch – but playing along anyways. I raised an eyebrow at her.

“We made a People!” Elvira blurted out, unable to bear the suspense any longer. I absorbed that for a moment, blinking in surprise.

“We wanted your approval before we introduced them to the Four Realms,” Keilan added, shooting a glare at his sister for her outburst. She had the

decency to look a little sheepish, but I wasn't paying attention all that much, practically vibrating in anticipation as I was.

"Well, what are you waiting for? Let me see them!" I cried happily, now well and truly excited. Keilan and Elvira both stepped back, letting Reika take center stage. She smirked at me and waved one hand, two bodies appearing before me. One was male, one was female, and they were clearly modelled after herself. With skin as dark as rich soil, hair like green grass, and the faint smell of dirt wafting forward, they represented all that was life in the world. They slowly spun in place, letting me get a good look at them – and I gasped in surprise as I let my divine sense touch their bodies.

It wasn't just that these people were bursting with life energy, as I had initially suspected. No, all the elements had gone into their creation; unlike the Fae, who were balanced with all the different energies of the universe, these beings were focused almost exclusively on the elements. Sure, there were bits and pieces of the other Realms' energies comprising them, but the elements were front and center. I expected it to be more unbalanced than it was. I was wrong.

"Beautiful..." I breathed, nodding appreciatively. "What do you call them?"

“Elementals.” She said simply. “The gods of the elements will likely want to create their own races, after we have made our own, but my People are comprised of all the elements and aspects of life. Hence, Elementals.”

“An excellent name. You have my approval, dear,” I said. Reika blushed and bowed her head, pushing her People to the side to allow Keilan and Elvira their own stage.

“We’re going to present ours together.” Keilan said. “Our domains are two halves of the same whole, as are our People.”

“Here they are!” Elvira cried, waving her hand and wings fluttering proudly. Four new beings appeared in my mediation chamber, mimicking Reika’s in the way they were presented. Immediately I could tell whose was whose because, like Reika and like myself, they had created their People in their own image, albeit with a few changes.

Elvira’s people had feathered wings, albeit with only a single pair compared to her six, and with mottled feathers. They had single, feather-tipped tails sprouting from their tailbones to aid in natural flight, and pointy ears tipped in feathers as well. The male was far brighter colored than the woman, with glossy feathers and an almost bluish tint to his hair. I peered closer at them, letting my sight examine the power that coursed through their veins, and was

almost visually assaulted by a flash of white light. Blinking away the spots in my eyes I smiled at Elvira.

"Lots of power in their physical bodies, but with a hint of mental in the mind and nervous system. And did you craft the cultivation passages from pure spiritual energy, from Alexander's realm? Untainted energy, capable of absorbing elements if necessary. Very interesting, Elvira," I praised. She beamed at me, setting her hands on her hips proudly as I turned to Keilan's creations.

For a split-second I blanched upon seeing them, mostly because they reminded me far too much of demons from Earth media in the later centuries. Ash-grey or black skin, hair as black as the night and eyes that were all one color. Small horns sprouted from their skulls, not nearly as long as the Fae's, but tipped with a touch of white. Thick, prehensile tails covered in dark scales stretched from their rears, leathery bat-wings sprouting from their shoulder-blades. But they were not malevolent, not crafted by or for negative energy. And speaking of their energy...

"Bodies of your black Yin energy, Keilan, with a touch of Elvira's Yang to bind it all together. Meridians of the same sort Elvira made, however...did you line them with karmic energy? So they will react more intensely to whatever karma they accrue...fascinating. Truly fascinating, Keilan," I said. He managed to remain mostly stoic at my praise, keeping it contained to a small smile on his

face and a nod of his head, but the twitching of his wings and tail betrayed how happy he was.

“What do you call them?” I asked, circling the two Peoples.

“Avians!” Elvira said. “I wanted to call them angels, but figured that would cause some confusion when they actually start to appear.” I nodded in approval. Angels were another matter entirely than mortal races...though that did make me wonder what they would look like in the Four Realms. Hm. I should add that to my to-do list, creating some.

“Karae,” Keilan said, turning away slightly. I narrowed my eyes at him. Was he...embarrassed? Wait – Karae?

“Karmic Fae?” I asked. A blush crept up on Keilan’s face as he nodded. I had to resist the urge to laugh. He was so proud of these People, and to get embarrassed by the name? It wasn’t like it was a bad name by any stretch of the imagination, I found it more cute than anything!

“I like it.” I assured him, carefully keeping the amusement out of my tone. Judging by the way Reika smirked at me and Elvira shot Keilan a sidelong glance I didn’t do a very good job. “Karae it is. On this day, three new Peoples

have appeared in the Four Realms! The Avians, the Karae, and the Elementals!"

Ding!

Creation!

Your children have toiled for millennia to create sapient beings worthy of walking alongside the Fae. And now, as a result of their hard work, three new species have appeared in the Four Realms.

Elementals

Children of all the elements, bound together in a physical form, the Elementals are beings of change. They are the eldest of their kind, but as time flows many variants will begin to appear, each following their own style of elemental evolution, making them one of the most adaptable races in the Four Realms.

Avians

Crafted from the white energy of the Heaven Realm, and given subtly by the black of the Karmic, the Avians are the spitting image of their divine parent, Elvira. With innately strong fleshly bodies, they will show an increased propensity toward physical cultivation, though that does not mean their talent in magic will be lacking.

Karae	Known as 'Karmic Fae,' the karae were born from the blackness of the Karmic Realm, and tied together by the white of the Heaven. Tied tightly to karma as they are, they are far more sensitive to the ethereal force than any of their fellows, and will show a greatly increased affinity for psionic abilities.
Total Number of Sapient Races:	4

...you timed that just to annoy me, didn't you? We're having a moment here.

"Good, good. You have my approval! Now go, spread them already! What are you waiting for?!" I barked, clapping my hands together.

Ding!

YES I DID.

Prick.

"Go, go, go! I wanna see what they do!" I continued, all but throwing a tantrum at my children. Reika giggled and Elvira outright laughed at my childish

whining, even Keilan cracking a smile as they collected their Peoples. I chased them out of my meditation chamber, laughing the whole way, and only stopped when they vanished out of my home. My smile faded slightly, and I turned back to my stone slab.

There was still much work to be done, but it was important to celebrate. Maybe I'll have one of my incarnations throw a party for my kids, in celebration of their creations? Yes, that sounded nice. But only after they finished getting things settled, which would take at least another hundred years. So in the meantime I settled back down cross-legged, breathing in and out as I prepared myself to start amassing power once more. Creating the Lunar Star would be no easy feat – I didn't have the endless power that came with creating the Four Realms anymore, not to mention everything had grown so much since then.

Nine divine avatars formed elsewhere in the Four Realms as my consciousness started to fall into a trance, most interacting with gods, or karmic kings, or performing basic maintenance. As for the tenth...I hummed. Why not go see how the Fae are doing, in person? I think I had the technique to tamp my aura down mastered enough that it won't be an issue...

Just as my consciousness faded, I felt it. A little blip in the Abyss, from the Void – but then it was gone, and I fell asleep.