Ruby Star
Creation Myth/World Introduction

A long time ago in another world much like this one, there were five friends. Each was a misfit and each left their home and hearth in search of something other than what they had. What they found were each other and nothing was the same thereafter.

These misfits were adventures, were each seeking fame, wealth, power or knowledge. As a group they grew in all these things beyond anything their world had seen. Even the gods themselves took a personal interest in this group, sending them on quests that impacted not only their world, but also much of the multi-universe. One such quest had two of their gods, named Loki and Thor, separately instruct them to recover a certain jewel of great power. While these friends were mighty, they feared being smashed between the desires of the two gods. Some of the friends wished to aid Loki, others Thor. But their friendship, as always, held true. Rather than giving the jewel to either god, they managed to keep and use the jewel for themselves. The jewel they kept is the seed that became our world. The five friends are known to us as Ishkibile, Ehlonna, Pelor, Kath, and Ishmael: now our gods.

—Introduction to an All-Gods Day Homely by Father Lynster, High Priest of the Five-Fold Path

The jewel stolen by the five was a “Jewel of Creation.” It is a manifestation of the order and power of a world yet to be born. Pelor was a paladin of Thor, while Kath and Ishmael were followers of Loki. Both gods had learned a new Jewel had been formed and both desired it for themselves. As the Jewel was located in a place where even the gods were mortal, both asked their greatest followers to retrieve the Jewel. Those followers, knowing they could trust their friends to help, agreed. When the friends realized that both gods had been promised the same Jewel they became afraid. While they were more loyal to each other than to their gods, they knew that giving the Jewel to either god would enraged the other. And going back on their word to their gods would likely result in the death of the worshipers of whichever god was betrayed. They decided to go on the Quest and upon completion randomly determine which god to give the Jewel. In the words of Ehlonna “Or, if we are most lucky, we will simply be killed in the attempt and none need die alone.”

To get the Jewel, each god provided certain instructions. Ishkibile, a great wizard, realized that these instructions, combined with the great deal of knowledge he had acquired on his own, provided a means for the friends to use the Jewel themselves. While it was general knowledge that only a god could use the Jewel, Ishkibile learned that it was actually the case that those who did use the Jewel to create a world would in fact become gods. In fact, having created a world was the path the current gods had taken to divinity.
What is reality? Look around you. Do you not see a blue sky, brown earth and green trees? “Surely” you say, “this is reality. I can also hear the wind and feel it upon my face. This is what is real”. The wisest among you might also argue that even if this is not reality, it makes no difference. “These perceptions are what we are born into” they say. “These things are there as we live. They are there when we die. Even if this reality is but an illusion, our perceptions cannot pierce the illusion, so it is our reality.” Such arguments are sufficient for most, but as a member of the Society your responsibilities extend beyond easily perceived reality and egocentric arguments.

Imagine darkness on all sides. In the distance there is a faint red sparkle. As you approach the sparkle you see it is made up of many red light sources: some dim, some bright, some nearly pink, others dark red. Each light sparkles and the whole makes up something resembling a pine tree with branches of red light sources and the small needles of light coming from each source. Some of the lights are large and bright, almost as a pinecone, while others are nearly lost in the light of their brothers. Our world is one of those lights. Those who became our gods took a Jewel and hung it on the tree. In doing so the not only created this young world, they also annoyed powers much greater than themselves.

—Excerpt from “An Introduction to Initiates” by Grand Master Ari Mendran, founder of the Society

The tree of the worlds is the Prime Material plane. Each of the worlds, each light, is latched into place by its connection to the Astral plane. That same Astral plane connects to the other, incomprehensible places where angels, devils, gods, and even stranger beings dwell. Those beings derive their power from the worlds in the Great Tree. They war over each one, hording the power gained from those they own. That power is used to wrest control from others, and to defend against such attacks against their holdings. These games are played on a time scale spanning thousands of millennia.

While there are many worlds, the world created by the five new gods seemed to be a particularly easy target for the various factions vying for power. First of all, there was no large faction protecting the world—the five friends were on their own. Secondly, the five lacked the experience and knowledge to defend their world. And lastly, they had made enemies of both Loki and Thor. What they had in their favor was Ishkibible’s research, their own power and loyalty, and that the other factions had to worry about spending more power than would be gained in conquering the world. The Five placed themselves in the Ruby world, locking themselves away from the rest of the multiverse (something the other factions would never have done as it would greatly stunt the growth and power of the world.). The Five then toiled in the design of their world, each building a portion as suited them but also building something that would suit them all. Ishkibible felt that they would be left alone, they were like a starving turtle pulled into its shell: hard to get out and not worth the effort for the predators. The others were less sure, they had mightily annoyed two of the gods.
While the gods toiled in the creation of the world each took a turn keeping watch, waiting for someone, or something, to try to break in. Instead something tried to break out.

Each Jewel of Creation is unique, with its own form. The base Jewel is a highly structured thing that is incapable of supporting something as chaotic as life. However, the creation process of a Jewel involves elemental powers and concepts to be imbedded in the Jewel. The concepts include things such as: Good, Luck, Joy, Evil, Beauty, Music, Justice and Liberty. The powers can include Magic, Science, Shadow, Positive and Negative energy, as well as Air, Water, Fire and Earth. In general these impurities are spread throughout the Jewel as Chromium is throughout a ruby. Simple measurements can detect these impurities, and the Five were well aware of the properties of their Jewel. However, in rare cases, raw instances of the elements can be trapped, defusing little if at all into the lattice of the Jewel. As the Five started to build their world, an impurity of Evil got involved.

It was Ishmael’s turn to keep watch for any attempts to penetrate into this world. As he did so he watched the other four at their labors. His portion of the World was underground. It was what he wanted and what he had chosen. But in watching the beauty created by the others he became jealous. Slowly his jealousy became a fire in his soul. Always the outcast among outcasts he became convinced that the others had cheated him. In anger he pounded on the Walls of the World. Evil had entered his heart, and in doing so he created a way for Thor and Loki to enter the world. Both had been watching the Jewel, now hung from the Great Tree. And both were ready when the opportunity presented itself.

—From An All-Gods Day Homely by Father Lynster, High Priest of the Five-Fold Path

Thor and Loki both sent minions into the World. Devils and Angels, Elementals and beings from other Jewels were sent. Ishkibile quickly sealed the rift in the Wall of the World, but it was too late; once inside these beings could reopen the rift for short times. They, and their world, seemed doomed. Further, the more the Five fought, the less stable their barrier. It was Ehlonna how found an answer. They had been creating the world with everything in stasis: nothing was yet living. She suggested that gods awaken the beings in this partially created world and enlist their aid. Having no other option they did just that. The Five focused on maintaining the Wall of the World, and the beings of the World began to challenge their invaders. When the Five and their allies looked as if they might win, Thor himself tore at the Wall, opening the way for his greatest followers. Loki then came to the Five with a proposal for a truce. Their forces combined, the Wall was reestablished, and with great effort and loss of life, Thor’s great followers either surrendered or were killed.
This “War of the Gods” had many side effects. Most obviously there were beings living in the incomplete world. Further, there were scars upon the world from the great battles. Less obviously, many of the great heroes and leaders of the world the Five had designed were dead. The cultures and societies the Five had planned would never be quite what they had designed. Also, as a part of the truce with Loki and the surrendering of portions of Thor’s troops a fair number of Out-Worlders remained.

In addition to the direct effects of the war, the Five began a survey of other trapped elemental forces. They learned that there are two forms these elemental forces take: “inclusions” where the impurity had not changed the lattice of the gem and “fissures” where the impurity had affected the nearby lattice. They found inclusions of Magic and Beauty as well as fissures of Truth, Magic and Evil, as well as a very small fissure of Shadow. These inclusions and fissures would be apart of Creation.

Each impurity would reach out and affect the world no matter the will of the gods. So they harness (Magic), allow (Truth, Beauty), or limit (Evil) these impurities.

Like any place, this world is defined by its history. But in this world, history has many meanings. The gods had planned on creating a world which had a history before it actually existed. As such there is the history which happened, and the history they created in the minds of its inhabitance and the bones of the Earth.

Its people live in an incomplete and broken world. The creation planned is still coming into existence as the created watch. There are enemies within (the Fissure of Evil) and without (Thor, Loki and other outworlders). The god's dominion over creation is dependent upon that creation keeping watch and fighting those enemies.
The World
The world is a Jewel. Those who dwell in a well-crafted world might never know that they were inside a Jewel. But in this world it is almost impossible to miss. The world has around a 950 mile radius at present. The walls of the world push farther out at about 1 mile per year. In the center of the world, some 200 miles in radius, is the Cedric, the saltwater sea. The greatest powers of the world, including the island nation of Haven, tend to exist in these waters. The rest of the world is broken into eight pie-shaped parts. The four great gods each dominate one of the eight parts. Between each of these so-called Cardinal lands are the Mixed lands. These are generally greatly influenced by the gods of the Cardinal lands on either side.

The sun rises and sets in the South, tracing a different path across the sky depending upon the season. The moon rises and sets in the North, with its path determined by the date of the month. The sky is a light blue when the sun is out, and a dark blue when it is not. The stars in the sky move in two different groups, one following a 10 year cycle, the other a 100 year cycle. When one gets within a few miles of the rim of the world, the red of the Walls of the World become evident. Within a mile the Wall's dark red glow dominates all but the brightest day.

Sun Kingdom
The land farthest to the south is dedicated to Pelor. It is where the sun rises and sets. The temples of worship to Pelor are large domed structures covered in gold leaf. Humans dominate the land, although dwarves, orcs and Halflings are not too rare. Hubward, the land is green and graceful and Pelor is worshiped as a wise and good god. As one moves Wallward both climate and religion are much more harsh. While firmly in the grip of Pelor, this land is often plagued by odd magical beasts of evil and chaos. The later is generally attributed to Kath.

Truit
The Mixed land shared by Pelor and Ehlonna is known as Truit. A five royal houses and a group of mainly Elven druids jointly govern Truit. When the old King dies, each house nominates potential successor. The Druids then select one of the five to be the new King. Humans and Elves are the most common races, but feral Halflings and a large Dwarven kingdom can also be found with in its boarders. Truit has recently suffered an attempted civil war at the hands of a demon-possessed 9 year-old girl. This has greatly sapped Truit's military strength (its legions were generally acknowledged to be the most powerful military force in the known world).

Elvenhome
Elvenhome is the land of Ehlonna. As its name implies, it is dominated by elven tribes. This forested land is also home to large numbers to goblins, orcs, kobolds and hobgoblins. The relationships between the different elven tribes are very fluid and often volatile. The humanoid tribes are often subservient to their elven neighbors, although a few are effectively the equals of the elven tribes. Homeport is the port town which boarders the Cedric and is the only place that non-locals are generally welcome.

The Wild
The Wild is just that, wild mix of jungle, forest and tundra. Most of the remaining dragons live here, and their moot forms the closest thing to a government seen in this land. Wild creatures of all sorts call this land home. Occasionally powerful groups of humans carve out a portion of the land for themselves. Usually these cities, libraries and temples all fall to time and ravage, but a few (most notably The Ancient Lore Society and the Keep of Boarders) have lasted for centuries. Pygmalion's temple is perhaps the latest and most significant new construction here.

Lunar Kingdoms
The Lunar Kingdoms are generally a cold land with a fairly short growing period, the weather getting colder the further Wallward you go. Humans and Goliaths make up most of the population, but far Wallward giants exist in significant numbers. Government mostly exists on a tribal basis, but a very complex set of bonds, rules and rituals results in a fairly functional, if chaotic, form of government. Every 20 years the tribes select woman to be "Empress". She generally helps to resolve tribal disputes and
provide what little leadership is needed. Most of her actual power is limited to the port town on the Cedric, which always bears the name of the current Empress (Currently it is known of Emerald, and the Empress is a Goliath). When the Empress’ 20 years pass she becomes the moon, which the natives seem to believe in some kind of a literal sense.

**The Great Plains**

One would expect that the land on the corner of chaos and magic would be a wild and dangerous place. In the words of one explorer “once you know what you are doing, the only real risk is dieing from boredom.” While there are extremely dangerous storms of magic that flow across the plains, divinational magic is quite capable of predicting their movement. These storms can have all sorts of impacts on living creatures. Usually it just kills them, but sometimes creatures come out as aberrations of various sorts. And sometimes the storm just leaves a creature unaffected. When a storm passes it leaves behind grasslands and plains, but in general the land is reshaped.

The native tribes, which usually consist of 3 to 4 different races, are adept at avoiding these storms. These hunter and gather tribes tend to be very peaceful and fairly well educated. This can probably be explained by most common aphorism heard on the plains "The only things you can keep are what you can carry on your body and in your head". This is the only land where there is no port town, or really any town of any type at all. The storms just wipe away nearly everything in their path. In the high mountains to the South and North is the occasional small village. Nearly every humanoid race known to the world can be found here. There are a surprising number of immigrants into this land. These are generally people looking for a better, if hard, life.

**The Hidden Lands**

The hidden lands are said to hide everything: good land, powerful wizards, and huge dangers. The land consists of mostly forest and grassland. Where the storms of the Great Plains cause nomadic behavior, the spirits that wander this land have quite the opposite impact. These spirits feed on sentient beings. Powerful arcane casters can keep them at bay. So cities and towns spring up around where these wizards settle. Government is generally a dictatorship by the arcane master of the town or city. There is a formalized challenge system to wrest a settlement from its current master. The port city of Migrus is the largest city in the Hidden Lands and is run by a council of arcane casters.

**Zeltser**

(Not developed yet)

**Haven**

Haven is the largest island in the Cedric. It is also the farthest to the North. Haven is the center of international commerce and diplomacy. The gods built large parts of the city, including their great temples at the city center and four huge housing complexes (each 10 stories) with running water and sewage. The city is the definition of cosmopolitan with elaborate theaters, libraries and museums. Perhaps the most striking thing about the city is how the natives have adopted to the occasionally nonsensical (and impervious) design laid out by the gods.

**Vesuv**

Vesuv is a small island that is the hub of the world. A large (10,000) population of dwarves live here, keeping watch on the Gate to the Underdark. After the Gods war, when many evil creatures were exiled to the Underdark, the various lands agreed to provide food and other goods to compensate the dwarves for their role as guardians of the Gate. In recent times many lands have been less forthcoming with aid and the dwarves have turned to raiding and piracy. This raiding has been a huge source of problems for Haven, as it is mostly their shipping that has been affected.

**Teliron**

Teliron is a very small island (6 square miles or so) which is ruled by the an organization with the humble title of "The Society for the Protection of the World" (Generally called "The Society"). Its members are recruited from the best of the world and act independent of any lands laws. They deal with otherworldly
visitors and punish those that summon them. While minor issues arise on a regular basis (they often have 2 or 3 cases open at any given time) their last major issue was with the demon Aculal who caused the civil war in Truit. While not an otherworldly problem per se (Aculal had been here since the God Wars) it was a major failure for the Society that he had caused so much chaos and destruction with out the Society lifting a hand until the very end.
A smaller destiny
While the world may be filled with great powers, each person must live their own, sometimes meager, life.

Truit has long used its far Wallward lands for exiles. It was for those whose punishments were to be something between a lashing and a death sentence. The Wallward land is plagued by near annual brush fires, a fair number of undead, and many problems generally associated with being near the Wall (odd creatures occasionally appearing and the like.) In general a new hamlet is founded once a year. Most of them are later abandoned, either due to the death of the inhabitants or as their exile ends. These locations are then reused in a later year. A few hamlets have continued to exist as going concerns. These include High Ground, Flintock and Golesbi. This part of Truit also has a few other settlements. The Gospels is a set of 4 halfling villages made up of religious apostates of Pelor. The Templars of Pelor are a Wallborn religious group dedicated to guarding a border that only has even started to exist in the last few years. The city of Genie Goad exists to the far North just more than a mile from the Wall and is mostly inhabited by Wallborn of many different races. Further, the city of Independence is home to Duke Washmal who oversees all of the most Wallward portions of Truit.

Flintock is a small hamlet, founded 12 years ago by exiles. It is run by Sir Zephyr, a Gnome wizard and his second in command, Sir Henry a retired sergeant in Duke Washmal’s personal guard. The hamlet has 21 homes. Other than Zephyr the only two races represented are humans (61) and orcs (19). The most prominent members of the community, other than Zephyr and Henry, are Goodwoman Alexandra, a 40 year-old nature worshiper and Master Ocrum a middle-aged orc merchant and elder of the hamlet’s orcs. Ocrum and all but the youngest orcs were Wallborn 12 years ago and elected to settle in Flintock.

Politics and recent happenings of Flintock
The Old Duke Washmal died 10 days ago. Word reached Flintock a few days later. Zephyr took his cart to Independence, both to pay respects and in hope of taking advantage of the change to get Flintock declared a village. He went alone as all able hands were needed for the harvest (in addition to keeping the normal watch for undead and Wallborn invaders). The change from village to hamlet would greatly help as it would involve a fulltime priest being assigned to Flintock, would likely protect it from new exile hamlets being placed near it, and would generally make Flintock grow rapidly. It would likely also involve a higher rank for Zephyr at some point in the future (to Baron). Ocrum is has been strongly favoring this as he hopes to have Zephyr later knight him. Goodwoman Alexandra has spoken against the change to being a village on the basis of not wanting "outsiders" taking a role.