

THE CREATION GODS

All of Rhyonis has the five Creation Gods to thank for their very existence. Though their creations would have no inkling of who or what they were *before* they were Creators. While there are countless Rhyonian legends and folklore surrounding these enigmatic figures, the truth behind their origin predates all Rhyonis, back to the Creator of Creators. To the dying remnants of a realm known as Power.

The sparse pieces of truth surrounding the Realm of Power are known only by the Creation Gods themselves, the Wyrms to emerge directly from Rhyonis' roots, and those truly legendary few to have the will power to contain the knowledge. This realm- this unstable imploding source of destructive existence- produced simply to tear Itself apart. In one calamitous moment, It did and spewed forth the five fragments that would go on to forge a realm of their own design.

Guiding His family into this new reality, St. Nihaan protected and led them with the shining devotion of a father, for which they named Him and their new realm *Rhyonis*. Existing without true form, His light and wisdom warmed the hearts of His companions and bolstered their resolve with His passion for their cause. With brilliant fervor, He created the spark of light that would become the sun of Rhyonis, Balasar, by breaking Himself off from a fragment of His own power.

Burning brightly and illuminating the days with righteous zeal, Balasar would tire, dim, and need his rest and darkness would fall on the new realm. The magical light of Balasar would stretch to cocoon the entire land in a universal day, regardless of its orbital position around the planetary realm. During these periods when Balasar would seek rest of his own, night would fall upon the realm, shrouding sense and reason in darkness. St. Nihaan knew there was more light to spread, to all corners of the realm, more to be done that could not in the darkness of night and cast His light beyond Balasar.

While Rhyonis opened His roots and the Wyrms scrambled in confusion in the oblivion of sunless night, St. Nihaan understood the significance of visibility. With a warm exhale, He cast the first star, or zardon, Zardonis into the void beyond Rhyonis referred to as Zardonarys. It is a minuscule, distant light that shone faintly but would continuously split and spread to create countless constellations to paint the sky while Balasar slept.

The First Beings would walk the lands, and in a lightless wilderness, untold dangers would befall them. Thus, these zardons were created to guide their journeys in a celebration known as Light Nights. To this day, people all across Rhyonis celebrate their birth and its anniversary by lighting paper lanterns and releasing them in the sky to join the zardons above; to illuminate the realm so long as they tread it.

As Zardonis divided, dust and debris collected through gravitational and magical forces, resulting in two more astrological bodies, much closer to Rhyonis, but dimmer than the diamond dust background painting behind them. Their spherical forms locked on the horizon would dim when in Balasar's light but would twinkle and glow

romantically as night fell. St. Nihaan would come to name these moons Maxiluna and Truciluna.

His power now spread across the realm, providing light for all those who called the realm home, St. Nihaan would weaken. It became evident that He would be unable to completely sustain His godly form within Rhyonis so long as He hoped to maintain the power balance He implemented. This would become the fate of all the Creation Gods, and while they toiled to create the realm, they witnessed themselves fade the more they allowed their creations to flourish.

Knowing that His scattered light along with the four remaining Creation Gods would be enough to sustain the realm if He faded completely, it was St. Nihaan who first proposed the idea of Domain Realms. His plan would see His deific family house themselves in these pocket dimensions apart from Rhyonis, but tucked within the folds of its reality, where they could observe and interact with the realm.

Most opposed to this idea was Lady Siesmet- the beauty of nature given physical form. Her kindness and grace exuded life and, from Her heart, emerged the seed that would fuel the world with the powerful magic capable of creating and sustaining life known as Life Essence. This seed, Rhyonis, would grow to be the Spring Tree of Life, a colossal emerald oak tree with leaves of pure radiant gold, signifying the budding growth of the realm beyond his home; the Life Glade. This Glade, a verdant expanse of uninhibited creation, is the source of all life in the realm and stretches for miles upon miles beneath the boughs of Rhyonis.

As the Mother of Life, Lady Siesmet's concerns deepened at the prospect of being cut off from Her children and adamantly rebuffed the proposal by Her companion. She pained at the thought of not being

able to aid in Her creation and as She wept, She felt the tremors in the land shake the foundation of the realm. Realizing just how true St. Nihaan's words were, for all the good She longed to do and love and life She wished to tend, Siesmet was aware of just how much danger She could pose to them all were She not able to maintain stability.

Contemplating Her fate, as well as that of those She still created from the Life Essence beneath Rhyonis, Lady Siesmet gave in to the turbulence in Her mind and Rhyonis, the Tree of Life himself, caressed his mother's hand with a vine. He embraced Her within his roots, ensuring She'd still provide as She so desired.

And with that, like an autumn leaf's graceful descent, Lady Siesmet was the first of the Creation Gods to find their Domain Realm, the reserve of Life Essence beneath Rhyonis within the Life Glade; Her Life Pools. To this day, Her power still sleeps beneath his roots and helps to manipulate and regulate the flow of Life Essence throughout the entire realm. It is this creation of new beings, providing and sustaining nourishment through the entirety of the land, that Lady Siesmet still interacts with the realm of Rhyonis, even from within the confines of the Life Pools.

The most reserved of the Creation Gods, and most in favor of a secluded space, was a powerful arcane practitioner who could interact with souls and harness the flow of Life Essence from dying creatures. Her name being Alaxendaria, the Grey Lady, Her toneless visage only matched in somberness by Her monotone drawling voice that seemed to lull even the most precocious of beings into a deep slumber. She did little in the beginning days of Rhyonis except watch and observe as Lady Siesmet's children would wander; first the dragons ferociously, then the First People senselessly. All around

Rhyonis they wandered until they would expire, where She would then collect the essence of their soul and retain them in a small pouch.

Life progressed and ended around Her, and upon seeing the endless extinguishing of it, She knew Her pouch would not be enough for the realm's dead too much longer. It was at this point when St. Nihaan began to form the ideas of Domain Realms and Alaxendaria had formulated Her own method of creating Her pocket dimension. Tearing Her soul pouch, She ripped the seams open with a nail like a reaping scythe, creating a tear in reality to form a new dimension that would house the souls of Rhyonis' dead, and the Goddess of Death Herself. This dimension, known as the Grey Lit Path, is illuminated by the amorphous, living source of light for the path and sole companion to Alaxendaria.

This entity, the Undying Light, illuminates a soul's past in warm luminous color if they lived a life of goodness, or chilling dark mist and shadow if they put forth evil and malice. Souls arrive on the Grey Lit Path after dying within Rhyonis in various conditions, surveyed and cared for by the Grey Lady; the shadow of Lady Siesmet tending to the living. Much to the fascination of Alaxendaria, the first soul to arrive on the Grey Lit Path carried a small crystalline object within its grasp. The object was completely foreign to the Goddess of Death, never having seen a soul possess anything within Her pouch as they were naught but wisps of fading Essence. Here on the Path, it seemed, souls possessed a more tangible and emotional form under the gaze of the Undying Light.

Alaxendaria observed the woman- an elf that had entered the Gravel Way from a hidden passage within Ish-Gahn- with the utmost fascination. The woman's skin was a deep stony grey, unlike that of any

elf known to Rhyonis, and Alaxendaria studied the events leading to her death. Starting with her direct emergence from the Life Glade, to her descent into a dark cavern, and the violent pain of oblivion that struck her heart and killed her. This sourceless strike ultimately transformed her fair skin to the slate tone that it showed now, and it seemed those who followed her met a similar fate. Their eyes clouded, skin shifted to blend with the caves around them, and they scattered across the intricate subterranean web beneath Rhyonis.

More souls would arrive on the Grey Lit Path as time trickled by, but none with a stone like the woman Alaxendaria would call Alaxes, meaning 'Lives' in Rhyonian Common. She began to theorize that her discovery of the Gravel Way, and swift demise in place of her people, were something of major significance as She witnessed more of these elves follow in her footsteps. In her wake, a new race of elves emerged from their exposure to the lightlessness of the Gravel Way; the cave elves. This heroic- tragic and accidental as it may have been-sacrifice was an Act of Significance, as Alaxendaria would call it. It was from this that, with the experimentation of Alaxes, Alaxendaria created Reincarnation.

If a soul of Rhyonis performs an Act of Significance, they are rewarded with a Soul Stone when they arrive on the Grey Lit Path. Alaxes was the first to do so under the guidance of Alaxendaria, and when she broke her stone, her soul was reborn into a new vessel into that of a human boy on Theurgius' coast, born at the exact same moment. This child would grow to lead a colony of settlers towards salvation and die and arrive on the Grey Lit Path once again with a Soul Stone. This cycle of Reincarnation was repeated several times over, and much to the joy of the otherwise cold and expressionless goddess,

Alaxes returned to Alaxendaria with a Soul Stone every life. It was due to the resilience of this soul that the first Bestowed God was created; Alaxes, Deity of Reincarnation.

Since then, Alaxes has disassembled Themselves, longing to be free of the confines of the Grey Lit Path and now lives fractured amongst all the Souls who've performed Acts of Significance. It is those who choose to stay on the path that Alaxendaria cares for, awaiting the day where She may need to depart Her dimension Herself to shepherd in the end of the realm, which too will die someday.

Easily the most carefree and oblivious to their significance to the realm, was none other than Kyah. As the rest of the Creation Gods tirelessly worked to lay out the world with their various talents and abilities, Kyah exuberantly soared the skyline, curiously hoping to uncover all the secrets the land below held. In His excitement, Kyah's sweat rained across the realm in massive tsunami-like waves, crashing into unpopulated shorelines. Unintentionally, He shaped the very continents of the realm, and the encompassing ocean that connects them all; the Continental Sea.

He would return sometime later to find His family perturbed by His absence, but greatly relieved when they realized just how important the Wind Rider's actions would become. He was so oblivious to His role that when St. Nihaan told Him of the plan to create Domain Realms, He had forgotten they set out to create a realm in the first place. He grew bored of the loathsome idea of being confined to this world now that they were free from Power and was already ready to move on to a new one. St. Nihaan intentionally neglected to tell Kyah that the new realm He'd be going to was a tiny pocket dimension, as punishment for abandoning their family. Had Kyah worked alongside

them in the Creation of the realm, and not sought wanton self-pleasure, He would have been granted free reign of His own Domain Realm, but St. Nihaan knew He could not be trusted to not emerge and wreak havoc upon Rhyonis were He afforded the freedom.

Just as Kyah slipped into the Abyssal Trench- the bottomless oceanic ravine in the Continental Sea- St. Nihaan sealed the passage behind Him. By locking Kyah within the Trench, He spared Rhyonis an immediate watery demise but may have only headed off the inevitable. Unsurprisingly enough, Kyah was enraged at His imprisonment and clashes against His binds, occasionally sending out terrible natural disasters. Though usually quelled by the Life Essence Lady Siesmet uses to interact with the realm, these disasters- be they tornadoes, earthquakes, hurricanes, or tsunamis- ravage the land without care for the designs of the other gods. Many know Kyah not to be a malicious god, just angry and spurned, but that does not stop them from fearing Him and the devastation He poses all the same.

Lastly, the most helpful in orchestrating St. Nihaan's Domain Realms, was the Time Architect of the realm, Malirica. Though all of Malirica's personas flow seamlessly through each other, as time seamlessly passes, two are most common in Their depictions personifying day and night. The day persona, Dawn, was instrumental in working with St. Nihaan's masterpiece of light over a realm of untold possibility. Dawn is described- in what little text remains through the shattered realities of Malrica's existences- as a warm girl draped in bright golden silks, with skin like hazelnut creme and auburn hair offset by the glistening copper freckles across Her blushed cheeks.

As St. Nihaan held the doll-like visage of the Deity of Time, He drew out the light of an entire day, refracting it, and opened a small

space, placing Malirica inside. He watched as Dawn, the Persona of Day in His hand, gradually transformed into an elderly man cocooned in swathes of navy-blue cotton robes. St. Nihaan knew this to be Dusk, the Persona of Night, and bowed to Him, the pair smiling at each other as they said their teary farewells. They knew that the only way for their creation to flourish, was for this sacrifice.

St. Nihaan watched through tears as the shimmering entrance to Malirica's Domain Realm vanished. He never asked the name or nature of Their mysterious pocket dimension, but He knew He'd never see Them emerge from it either way.

Heartbroken at watching His family slip away, St. Nihaan, who had intended to cast Himself out first, was now the last of the Creation Gods. The light refracting from His tears cast rainbows across the realm and, as He shut His eyes, the prismatic arches shattered, raining shards of magical glass fragments into the Continental Sea and across the various landmasses of the realm. When the last color fell from the sky, all that remained of St. Nihaan's form vanished and He entered His Domain Realm, His first creation for Rhyonis; the Blazing Beacon, Balasar.

Living with whatever thoughts seared His mind, St. Nihaan watches from within Balasar, feeling the rampant emotions of His companions, though separated by physically impassable dimensions.

The exhaustion of a laboring mother within Siesmet, deep beneath the Life Glade.

The morbid curiosity of the flow of life from Alaxendaria's Grey Lit Path.

The unrelenting rage of a caged storm sealed with Kyah in the Abyssal Trench.

In the wake of Their destruction by The Mistress' hand, the insurmountable pain of fractured existence which eradicated Malirica's timeless dimension- Miracle- resulting in the Sentience Shockwaves that batter the realm to this day.

The Creation Gods, for all their power and good intent, were their own downfall. Now, scattered and sealed away, they watch from their Domain Realms as the world they set out to build together falls apart. With so much out of their hands, hope for salvation lies within a single magical note that rang out from Malirica as They were destroyed within Their Domain Realm.

This sound- created by an imploding realm, rife with deific reality warping magic, and the scream of a dying deity- shot across the Fixed Moment Timeline. It rings discordantly, yet harmoniously, singing out like beautiful alien music. It reverberates over itself, untethering time, space, light, darkness, and all it touches with a melodic whistle that can manipulate and transmute just as it destroys.

Unknown to even the Creation Gods, it was discovered by a dragon soldier of Angehlah after the War of Draconic Divergence and, when he brought it to Her, the Ascended Goddess of Sentience was aware of the power and danger it posed. In a singular motion, She contained both the soldier and magic in a warded vault so that not even the memory of them could escape to harm the realm She fought so desperately to save.

So, to this day, the note stays sealed, just as the Creation Gods remain within their Domain Realms. One cannot be freed without the

other, and as Malirica wrote into the Fixed Moment Timeline- though more has come to pass than was meant to- the Hands of Time will guide the Singer to the Song.