

THE KYRINTHAN JOURNALS: BEGINNINGS STANZA 1, VERSES 1-82



SPOILER WARNING: The following contains key spoilers for the story that unfolds through all four books of the Pearlsong Refounding tetralogy. To avoid these, you might prefer to hold off reading this until after you have finished reading the series.

Among the many tragic legacies left in the wake of Gideon's Fall, few have borne consequences quite so dire as the loss of our history as a race. The actual, true story of how humanity came to be, by what hand, and to what end, has been largely erased from the annals of the Lands' official archives. At first this loss came by way of attrition, through the distracted neglect of the first lords after the Fall—a neglect born of fear and, I am convinced, stoked from the shadows by Avaddon throughout the entirety of that Age. With the arrival of Palor Wordwielder and the Council Lords who followed him, the scrubbing became more overt and malicious, with lords in each successive generation working with great intention to eradicate any and all historical accounts that did not reinforce their preferred narrative. When met with resistance from the archivists themselves, as was often the case, the lords were all too willing to eradicate them as well.

Nevertheless, through the courage of a few archivists and scribes throughout those Dark Ages, critical scrolls were preserved, secreted away in hidden vaults deep beneath Valoran sounden, their keepers sworn to secrecy through sacred oaths that were transferred down from one generation to the next. What parts of our story could not be preserved by those brave souls were later recovered within the records and tapestries of Wordhaven itself. Thus, despite our enemy's pernicious and relentless campaign through the

generations to remake the story of our beginnings to his liking, nothing of the truth of our origins has been lost.

Let us, then, begin here, with that truth. Here is the story of our world and how it came to be.

The Giver is the All-Creator who is actual and real, though until the Visitation she was believed by many to be a disinterested deity—that is, one who created the world but then largely left it to run on its own. But this is not how she was regarded by anyone in the Endless Age, before the time of Gideon’s Fall. In those days, the relationship of the Giver to the people was most like that of a Mother, a Teacher, or even a Lover. She was a guide to humankind, whom she created not as finished beings but as seeds, flimsy and frail like those of the mighty *bian’ar*. She planted us in the earth, with the intent to tend to us and nurture us and grow us up into the fullness of glory and beauty we hold latent in our souls, so that each of us may join with her and the chorus of our ancestors to continue our journey together into greater adventures in the next iteration of life.

To aid her in this quest, the Giver chose to create not only humans, but a vast array of life scattered all across the many worlds. From the teachings of the Pearl in the Book of *Dei’lo*, we know all this life exists as one of three types:

Eshi—Purely spiritual creatures that inhabit a realm invisible to physical eyes. Some have great intelligence and serve specific purposes ordained by the Giver, while others exist purely for their own delight and the delight of their Maker. While eshi do not have corporeal bodies, some have the capacity to appear as if they do.

Somi—Purely physical creatures that exist exclusively within the material realm. They each possess an intelligence appropriate to their kind, but all are bound to the material world, and have either no awareness or no interest in spiritual realities.

Som’eshi—Beings that are both spiritual and physical. They exist as living links between the two realms, with aspects of their identity tied to one or both at the same time. This includes humans and all the other sentient races within our world, as well as many of its creatures. While all Som’eshi are birealmic, only some are fully aware of this fact. One shared quality of all Som’eshi is that their existence continues beyond their physical death.

Among the eshi, seven were invested with very great power by the Giver for a particular purpose. These are called the Mel’eshi, or “Cardinal Spirits,” each endowed with a particular virtue that lives eternally within the Giver. Each of these virtues empowered its Mel’eshi to create sentient life, and each Mel’eshi was tasked to create a sentient race in the world that would help guide, serve, and accompany humanity on its journey to reach its full potential. Being fully spiritual, the Mel’eshi have no form that we would recognize,

but can, by means of their own power, take any form they wish, though it would always be spiritual in nature. They cannot become corporeal themselves, but can speak to and, with permission, even inhabit the body of any sentient being, especially those of the race they created.

Here are the names of the seven Mel'eshi along with the races they created:

UZURI (oo-ZUHR-ee): The Mel'eshi of Beauty. Creator of the Zerthrus Deer, magnificent creatures more graceful and beautiful than all other beings that exist in the world. Before Gideon's Fall, the Zerthrus Deer lived among humankind, guiding them toward a deeper understanding and appreciation of beauty and its inherent power to rescue, heal, and inspire all things. After the Fall, they hid themselves in the wild places of the world, determined to preserve the message of beauty against the coming Dark Ages. While typically reclusive and quiet in nature, they have been known to come near whenever beauty is honored or gravely needed.

ODIRAN (OH-dir-an): The Mel'eshi of Presence. Creator of the Carreg, languid, humanoid beings made of living stone. Taller than humans, their skin is rock hard and cool to the touch, the color of blue-grey stone, though sometimes mottled or mixed with veins of other colors or crystal. Both male and female Carreg have regal bald heads, broad noses, high cheekbones, and pointed ears. Their almond-shaped eyes are white with pupils the color of various precious stones. Their bodies are muscled but trim rather than bulky. They move with the grace and precision befitting a sculptor or mason of the highest caliber. Before Gideon's Fall, they were the stonemasons of the world, teaching humankind how to work with stone and to build their cities and soundens. Agatharon, which is even today known for its stone lore, was once a great teaching center for the Carreg. After Gideon's Fall, the Carreg all disappeared. At the time, no one knew what became of them. In truth, they never left, but at Odiran's command, they simply retreated into whatever wild lands lay near their homes and fused themselves into the cliffs and mountains of the world, going into hibernation until such a time as Odiran or the Pearl would call them to wake.

SAJIR (sah-JEER): The Mel'eshi of Wisdom. Creator of the Athromir, rare beings, close to human in appearance but more beautiful, with skin that was said to seem to glow, in tones ranging from black to blue to green to violet. They had white flowing hair and rainbow-hued eyes, and tattoos on their foreheads that carried meaning only they understood. While once tasked as advisors to world leaders, they withdrew to their high-place strongholds after the Fall, where they now live largely solitary lives. They are long-lived and passionate about learning, and are thus masters of many arts. The archives show

that the Kolventu were once special acolytes of the Athromir, but lost their connection with them when they, trusting too much in their own wisdom, signed the Pact with Wordhaven that cleaved them off from the Pearl and the Inherited Lands.

ERUKIA (eh-rue-KEY-uh): The Mel'eshi of Compassion. Creator of the Zitani, a race of violet-eyed, turquoise-skinned people who dwell in the great desert on the continent on the other side of the world. They have four fingers on each hand and four toes on each foot. They are typically shorter than humans, though not so short as Wondrojan, with smaller frames. They have distinctively feline features, with hair colors ranging from light yellow to orange. They are unaffected by heat or cold or the harsh light of the sun. They are said to be able to heal any disease or repair any injury. Before Gideon's Fall they lived as nomads, traveling in small bands from sounden to sounden, offering their healing abilities and medical knowledge to all who needed it. After the Fall the Zitani became isolationists, living in great monastery-like strongholds in the desert on the far side of the world. They blamed humanity for the Pearl's destruction, and so abandoned them in accordance with Erukia's wishes. Because this stance is diametrically opposed to the virtue of compassion, they have become a fallen people in service to a fallen Mel'eshi. Erukia deeply loved the Pearl and ultimately blamed the Giver for her creation of humankind and for permitting Adir to live after his rebellion. As far as we know, the Mel'eshi of Compassion has not spoken to the Giver since Gideon's Fall.

HAGARAX (HAG-uh-rax): The Mel'eshi of Courage. Creator of the Wondrojan. Also known as the Sea Folk, the Wondrojan are a squat race of seafaring people who once lived alongside humans in nearly all walks of life, challenging them to take risks and go on grand adventures all around the world. They were fearless and stubborn, and although sometimes too obstinate for their own good, were generally regarded as great allies and friends to humans. After the Fall, in their rage they took to the sea, abandoning the land and all the humans on it. Now they live their entire lives on the open oceans. Even their primary city, Vaganti, is a floating island that drifts on the ocean currents all across the world. Like the Zitani, the Wondrojan blamed humanity for the destruction of the Pearl, but their abandonment of humans was not quite so absolute. They still interacted with humans, though mostly through trade, and not without a fair bit of disdain. Ironically, in the two millennia they've been at sea, the Wondrojan have themselves lost their connection to the Giver and their memory of the Endless Age. Most of them now believe all of that is merely legend, stories for children. The spell of the sea has caused them to forget who and what they really are.

ADIR (ah-DEER): The Mel’eshi of Strength. Now known as Avaddon, he was the strongest of all the Mel’eshi, and as such, took it upon himself to be their leader. He acted as the prime liaison between the Mel’eshi and the Giver. However, before he could create a race of his own to aid the humans, the Giver spoke, and the Words became the living Pearl. The Pearl was stronger and more glorious than Adir, even equal to the Giver herself. Realizing he was no longer the mightiest next to the Giver, envy came into the heart of Adir, and from that instant on, he became something other than what he was made to be; out of that darkness was forged a place in the universe where the Giver was not. He gave himself the name Avaddon, meaning “ruin and destruction,” because he brought a new power to ruin and unmake the Giver’s universe and supplant it with the unbeing of his own. Though it grieved the Giver deeply, she cast Avaddon out of her presence. The power to create was taken from him, and a prison was fashioned of matter and spirit, which she called Morstal, meaning “grievous and bitter.” There Avaddon was held, out of time and space, until the Giver could find a way to restore him again.

In time, she decided on a course of action to attempt to restore Avaddon back to grace. She placed the prison where Avaddon was held inside a great mountain on the world—we know it now as Castel Morstal—and gave him the means to observe the world and all the people in it. She meant this to be a way of showing him the preeminence of light over darkness, of good over evil, through the struggle of humankind to rise above their shadows and become in fullness the glory that was seeded within them. She did this in the hope of persuading him to lay down his avarice and seek restoration. By all accounts, however, he remains unrepentant.

There is one additional side note here that is worthy of mention: Since the power to create was taken from Avaddon, he never crafted a race of his own. The riftmen are the closest we see to that now; yet they are not a true creation, but a perversion of *Sa’lei* inflicted on the human soul. However, not wanting humanity to suffer loss on account of Adir’s rebellion, the Giver herself stepped in and created the mountain dragons, who were made as exemplars of the virtue of strength Adir was meant to display but never did.

ESAMIR (ES-uh-MEER): The Mel’eshi of Spirit. Creator of the Raanthan, imposing, ethereal beings who live on the icy plains and mountains of the Raanthan Plateau. Like all the sentient races, the Raanthan are Som’eshi—that is, forged of both flesh and spirit—but they have a more dominant spiritual aspect to their being than humans do. They are more akin to the Zerthrus Deer in this respect—material creatures that can at times seem to be more spirit than flesh. In addition to their physical bodies, the Raanthan also exist within dimensions that humans can only partially perceive. For

example, Raanthan have wings, which allow them to fly after a manner, but these are wholly invisible to human eyes, existing as they do exclusively within the spiritual realm. Likewise, they can conceal themselves outside the natural light spectrum for short periods when they wish, very much like some other creatures within the Lands can do (for example, the di'yadi and the Zerthrus Deer).

The Raanthan were visited by the Pearl before the Pearl came to humankind; thus, their relationship with the Pearl is unique to their race. They were tasked directly by the Pearl—not solely through the Mel'eshi Esamir—to guide and protect humanity on their spiritual quest toward union with the Giver. For this reason, when the Pearl was destroyed, the Raanthan perceived it as their own great failure. They took the blame upon themselves, and in their shame exiled themselves to the northern wastes, far away from humankind. Since that time, factions have arisen within their ranks. Some have turned to darkness, while others have clung to hope that redemption for their race may yet be possible.



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— Michael