

Excerpt from The Record of The Fall, first of many volumes containing the history of the Lytefok. Studied, drafted, and published by Caliban Danikos, last living member of the Lytefok, scholar of the floating Cloudspark University, High Scholar of the Fallen Gods, author of The Histories of the People of Magic, Magical Absolution, The Morality of Spartech, and The Sparkyon Forge: An Investigation Into What Was Forged in Mount Barimon. Professor of Ethereal Ethics and Magical Moralities.

Introduction:

Everyone remembers the eve the gods left. Their time with us, long as may have seemed when written in scrolls and parchment, was but a single generation for the Lytefok. On that humid summer's eve, the people of the Magisterium gathered together beneath the spark light of The Vessel, instrument of our gods arrival. Now instrument to their departure. I should make it abundantly clear, it was not all of our god's choice to leave us. Their holy imperative, cascading through eons as they searched the void for our star, our planet, had always been to create life and, after a time, leave the world on which they lived to retire to the Celestial Plane. This would have allowed them to hear our prayers still, but restricted their ability to directly influence our world to working through their vessels. One can only imagine the worlds that see this process come to fruition. Our world may never know.

The pantheon that created us, this world and its many peoples, was kind and passionate. They worked in the soil with us, taught us magic with their own hands. But one day, our oracle god, Omni the All-knowing beheld an omen so terrible it would sow seeds of dissent within the gods themselves. You can imagine its impact on the people. Omni saw a world torn asunder by magic. The very tool that made us, turning inwards against us, and all existence blinking out in inevitable cryon. Many of our gods saw this vision as a sign of their required departure. That perhaps if they followed their edict to remove themselves, then the world would be spared from this demise so cruel. Others, loudest among them our Light Bringer, Oshiiri, stood in defiance of this interpretation. For their actions they were labeled Betrayer, stripping them of the honorific the Lytefok had bestowed upon them. From Aemon the Accuser slipped the words. Those present for the moment shook in fear, and anger, and sadness.

In the ensuing years the divisions among the Magi grew deeper and more grievous. Omni the All-knowing, fearing the vision that he had would come from unregulated magical practice, created the Omnicap. The Magical police sought to weed out the use of more chaotic magics, their Magenauts swift and stern. The day the Omnicap were created Oshiiri protested their institution. This would divide the Lytefok as time progressed. Those who heeded Omni's warning turned to reporting family, friends, and acquaintances that they suspected of improper magic use. Those who believed in their Light Bringer, sought to discover the means of controlling the chaos of magic, hoping to assuage the doom foretold.

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Unable to leave without trying, Barimon disappeared into his mountain forge, hoping to find a solution to the coming chaos. His followers told tales of a god wracked with guilt and shame, working tirelessly at the bellows to find that spartech that would prove vital in the coming trials. He wasn't seen by the people of the Magisterium for decades. Ilyustra, our goddess of hope, struggled to show a strong face in what would become these final decades. The mirth that dripped from her countenance tainted by the sorrow wrinkled upon her brow. Vredefort, unable to bear the division in his family fought to bring the Magi together, but in his efforts, perhaps not of his own fault but rather the fault of circumstance, led Oshiiri to cast off the term fabrate completely. A word meant to describe a bond closer than blood was cast aside. Oshiiri's anger at their brother's and sister's actions had driven them to darkness.

In the final years of the Tenure of the Magi, Barimon emerged from his forges. But what soot dirtied his face did not sing of victory. In his efforts to build tools to stave off chaos he had also built the perfect tools to unspool that chaos. His followers knew what he had made. They called them the Sparchyon Artifacts. Barimon refused to share them with the Lytefok, knowing the Artifacts ability to wreak havoc. Afraid that the Magi's departure was imminent, the Lytefok that had succumbed to fear attacked Barimon's keep, seeking to claim the Sarchyon Artifacts for themselves. Barimon the Guilty, named so for the guilt he felt, fought alongside his people, hoping to keep his creation out of fearful hands.

Perhaps it was the truth in Omni's vision. Perhaps it was the decades of uncertainty. Perhaps it was the tutelage of Oshiiri. No one is quite sure how, but the Lytefok that attacked Barimon's Keep broke through. In a last ditch effort to save the world from his creation, Barimon sent his most trusted followers away, through hidden caverns, tasking them with hiding the Sparchyon Artifacts. Miraculously, perhaps even thankfully, they were never seen again. Alone, surrounded, defeated, Barimon raised his forge hammer over his head and in a final cry, brought it down in the center of his hold. The walls crumbled in, destroying all who remained. No one knows what Barimon did in the aftermath, but today he sits, encased in firestone, upon his throne, his hammer still in his fist, his head hung low. The god of the forge sputtered out, the coals gone cold.

Everyone remembers the eve the gods left.

Our Light Bringer, Oshiiri, stood in front of the gathered Lytefok, begging their brethren not depart. Ilyustra the Hopeful, led a prayer at her temple, outside the city limits. Members of her cloister tell tales of a river of tears pouring from her face. Oshiiri, screamed at the Vessel, their hands outstretched, cupping fragments of their brother Vredefort, shattered hours earlier by the fracture of his family. I was there, reader, and when I tell you I could not have predicted what would happen next, but I perhaps should have...

As the Vessel lifted off the ground Oshiiri's cries became pained howls. Their shrugging, sobbing shoulders gave way to tremors most violent. The tears in their eyes ran black as the Vessel arced higher and higher into the sky. For a moment it felt as if the stars in the sky blackened. Oshiiri dropped the fragments of Vredefort to the ground and raised their hands to

the stars and a terrible light pooled above their head, groaned, and raced into the sky. A gasp rippled through the crowded Lytefok as they watched in horror as a brilliant, horrible bolt of magic raged into the sky. I must write with personal dismay that the detonation was perhaps the most beautiful thing I had ever beheld. The bolt collided with the Vessel and in an instant what was the Ark of our Magi was torn asunder, blooming forth into a shower of rainbow magic and glistening debris. For moments that felt like hours we stared into the sky and back to Oshiiri. The black streaks on their face made permanent, as no effort to wipe them away proved useful. They fell to their knees and a murmur filled the air. The murmur grew and grew, a cacophony of terror and dismay until finally a single voice cried out. To this day no one knows from whom it came.

What have you done? They cried.

Oshiiri the Betrayer stood, sorrow choking their throat, and surveyed their people.

I have earned my name. They said. And for that I am so sorry. And they vanished in a cloud of swirling magic.

Everyone remembers the eve the gods died.

## **Chapter 1:**

Oh my dear reader. If only I was able to tell you the deep sadness of our introduction was countered by some miraculous coming together of the Lytefok in the days that followed. On the contrary, as the people watched their gods shatter in the sky their alliances soon followed suit. It wasn't a sudden and violent change, for while it was quick, tensions swirled beneath the guise of shambled diplomacy and sudden aimlessness. Within weeks what was once the Vessel of our Magi became the instrument of almost certain doom. Our mages and scholars, myself among them, deduced that the brilliant wreckage that hung above our heads was on a collision course with the Magisterium. The very city we called home.

The scholars leapt into action, cataloguing and packing away our library to be carted away to safety. Many followed suit, beginning the morose process of storing away our most valuable possessions for a trek into the unknown. But what many from the outside would assume to be an obvious and urgent task, to those of us close to it, was unfathomable. Though we appeared to prepare, still many sat idling in their homes, many continued about their daily tasks and responsibilities. This was not entirely without merit, as how could one blame the doctors for going to work, the teachers for instructing our children, the farmers from plowing their fields? Still, what needed to be a universal effort to vacate our beloved home was mired in a sort of miasmic indecisiveness. A well was dug on the outskirts of the city. For where would we draw water when our wells in the city were inaccessible? A levee to shore up fish was built in the bay. For where would we gather our food when the fields were torn asunder by falling rock and ash?

For all of these projects and misguided tasks I find it most important to bring an air of understanding and forgiveness to their study. As one of the last living to have witnessed these proceedings myself, it must be understood that the Lytefok were in deep and mournful grieving. A grief that strikes so deep into the heart that furrows the brow of even the heartiest constitutions. Sags the shoulders of the most jovial children. The Lytefok had borne witness to the death of their creators first hand. It is a miracle that any of us survived at all.

The loss of a parent is a process that, though impossible to conceive mentally, will afflict us all at some point. Death is often an unpredictable matter. The Lytefok understood that death was a possibility, but for the most part, that possibility was rarely thought of. It had only been eighty years since our collective birth, and we had deduced easily enough that due to our being made of the Spark, time and aging was a slow and unworrying dilemma. Still, being educated by the Magi, we were broadly aware that death would come for all of us, eventually. In the time since these days we have been able to fully navigate the span of our lives and the lives of those around us. Now death is far more common, and for that reason, far less startling. It should also be made clear then, that the death of the Magi was the first instance of spontaneous death the Lytefok had ever witnessed. Let alone conceived of. Though, sadly, would not be the last time we would experience it in the coming days.

As factions began to arise among the Lytefok, Omni the All Knowing's Omnicap stood in the breach first. They organized the population well, and structured our exodus with deftness in those first days. But the actions of a guideless population are unpredictable, and would prove to be troublesome. Some would deny the coming destruction, satisfied to wait it out, skeptical of the scholars mathematical deductions. Still others believed that Illyustra, the last Magi among us, would find some magical solution. What followed was a busied and harebrained effort of many people to find solutions. Some quick, some tedious, some well thought out, and some hasty.

After a messy Spring, a frustrated and nervous School of Mages and Scholars sought to organize the chaos and assumed control of the bureaucratic level of the Magisterium. This was *accepted* cautiously. The people were restless, yes, but they had never been under the improvisational rule of interim leaders. The next few weeks were tense. Progress eked forward. Their efforts greatly impacted by the appearance of both predators lurking in the caves beneath the city, and the scattered followers of Barimon reappearing in droves. After months of absence they had returned from their task of hiding away the Sparkyon Artefacts. Their reception was tense at the very least. Many inquired about their journey. They spoke not a word of their mission.

As winter approached, the plague of worries reached its peak. The wreckage of the vessel now occupied fully half of the sky and, as a result, many of those denying the coming destruction were forced to face their fears. Most importantly, the Omnicap grew impatient as people refused to move. One could forgive their impatience, after all the bloody sky was falling onto them. However, it was their method that roused the people of the Magisterium against them. Early in the fall they began forcing people out of their homes, protests began within the day.

When I tell you that my people were not prepared emotionally for the year that followed the death of their gods, know that I am telling you the truth.

The protests quickly became violent as the Omnicap were unmoved from their convictions. Fires, destruction, chaos. Then all went deadly still. On what would later be known as the last day of the protests, Illyustra, our goddess of hope, or last remaining parent, was killed by the Omnicap. The roar in the city went dead in an instant. The Lytefok circled around their fallen mother, wept into her robes, and a moan of sorrow filled the night.

Somehow, despite these events and the many that followed shortly thereafter, my people made it out of the Magisterium. Most of them. Some founded a city beneath the coastal cliffs and barricaded themselves in the dark. An ill-fated expedition to the northern forests was beset by kidnappings and abandonments. But in the final moments, as the sky literally roared down upon their former home, the Lytefok set off into the east from Eastmarch, fireworks in the distant sky, perhaps the last sign from Illyustra. They hardly had the time to look back and notice the signal coming from Barimon's Keep. But later, long after this terrible time, they would learn.