

Book I

The First Age: The Age of Elmar

As Recorded by the Scribes of Anarador

Chapter I: The Creation of Eldar and the Ordering of the Haihalarim

Little is known to us about the days before even our earliest ancestors were placed upon Elmar. But our forefathers were among those first created, and they have passed the knowledge of the origin of all things onto us, or at least as much as they wish for us to know; and we cannot be so brazen as to ask for more. In the beginning, it can be understood that nothing existed save The Creator, himself. It is not known why the thought entered His vast mind to begin this process of creation, which has yet to near its completion, but we have faith that it was in His ever-reaching wisdom that we and the world we inhabit were created for some purpose which is as of yet beyond our comprehension.

The first of His creations became His two great hands; Alinara and Kraag; the embodiments of creation and destruction. Alinara was as a magnificent bird with shining plumage in all colors that could be conceived by Him, with a gleaming crest of long feathers, upon which were written the names of the angels, the gods, the beasts, the races, the prophets, the kings, the soldiers, and the holy men; as well as the names of all things in nature and in the heavens. And upon her breast were three great crests; and scrawled upon them were the names *Alder*, *Valhalas*; and in the center, a name which none could decipher, being the name of The Holy Father, himself.

Kraag was a tremendous beast with hair that was like fire. Set into his skull were three eyes that burned with flame, seethed with frost, and sizzled with venom. His powerful arms bore great claws that could rend time and tear space, and upon his great curving horns and vast back he supported the raw nothingness that would become the worlds. With a breath of his nostrils he could shape or destroy, and with a flick of his tail he could lift up or cast down. Burned into his breast was the word *Emnas*, which means false, for despite his power he was subject to the command of his sister, Alinara; and all things that seemed to be born of him, were commissioned by his graceful sister.

Before the first world came into being there was a great void; a vast nothingness which reigned over all and stretched between the far edges of existence. Before anything

could be created, Halatu knew, the emptiness had to be destroyed. And so Kraag was unleashed by the Holy Father and, with his burning claws, rent the void into smoldering bits. When at last the great black nihilism had been slain, Kraag was called back and Alinara spread her shining wings over the broken and shattered remains and creation was begun.

By the searing flame and the blessed word, the first world came into being, beyond the reach of the universe. And it was called Eldar, for it would be the origin of all things to come. It was made vast and strong by the hands of the Father, and was built as a tower with eleven tiers and eleven walls and eleven thrones; and upon the topmost throne was seated The Lord, himself, with the Shining Bird and the Burning Beast at the sides of his altar. Upon the ten other thrones he placed the first of his children.

The tenth tier of the tower was made like a palace of gold and crimson, with high towers and palisades that glowed with warmth. This tier was called *Arenthel* and upon its throne was seated *Orifala* or *Lucifirus*, or *Lucifer* whose name means “Light Bringer” and “Holy Fire.” *Lucifirus* was named the high prince of Eldar, first of The Father’s children, and to him was given The Fire of The Lord which burns in the heart of the universe.

The ninth tier of the tower was built of sleek ivory and its halls were filled with gentle mist. Upon its walls, Alinara inscribed the names which were written on her crown. This tier was called *Nalenthel* and upon its throne was seated *Urialala* or *Urielus*, or *Uriel* whose name means “Holy Word.” *Urielus* was named the keeper of the book which contained all knowledge conceived from The Father and studied all things contained within its innumerable pages, so as to embody the laws of Eldar and all beneath it.

The eighth tier of the tower was like a temple with walls of blank parchment, upon which the doctrines of The Lord were scrawled unceasingly by its keeper. This tier was called *Palenthel* and upon its throne was seated *Gabralala* or *Gabrielus*, or *Gabriel* who is called the “Holy Scroll.” *Gabrielus* was named the messenger of The Lord and keeper of his voice which was spread to the tiers below.

The seventh tier was a swirling wind tunnel of stone through which great gusts charged through and cut the images of the saints into one rocky wall. It was a hall of honor for the most blessed of beings that paid homage to Eldar and cared for its children. From the other wall was chiseled the images of the villains, a hall of disgrace for those who have caused pain to Eldar and its children. This tier was called *Maenthel* and upon its throne was seated *Sacelahala* or *Sakielus*, or *Sachiel* whose name means “Holy Arrow.” *Sakielus* was named the herald and keeper of heroes and the marker of fiends, that both shall be known to all and praise and condemnation be paid to those deserving of each.

The sixth tier was a teeming forest of green life, and all things within it glowed with health. Here sprouted a great tree whose limbs bore fruits of great number and variety; and all could cure sickness, pain and worry. This tier was called *Megenthel* and upon its throne was seated *Samala* or *Samaelas*, or *Samael* whose name means “Holy

Scepter.” To Samaelas was given the duty of rekindling the soul and healing the flesh. He was the great redeemer and the gatherer and in his scepter was kept the anointing waters.

The fifth tier was a lively garden encircled by tall marble columns and works of noble and beautiful art. A high fountain sprayed sparkling water into the air and fell into a quietly roaring spring with a river running to the outskirts of the grand tower. The flowers were full of color and the whole air was alive with sweet music that seemed to come from nowhere and everywhere at once. This tier was called *Mellenthel* and upon its throne sat *Anala* or *Anaelas*, or *Anael*, who was called the “Holy Strings.” *Anaelas* was the great artist who filled the world of Eldar with music and beauty. Ever onward he played his graceful harp, and all who heard its sound were cheered.

The fourth tier was as a vast field just in the bloom of spring. Out of the soft grass sprung playful flowers who drunk deeply from the nourishing stream that flowed from *Mellenthel*, and played by its banks. Beneath the shade of an ancient and glittering willow a mound was raised with an earthy throne. This place was called *Alinthel* and upon that throne sat *Raphala*, or *Raphaelas*, or *Raphael*, who was the “Holy Staff.” *Alinthel* was a place of quiet comfort where the weary were welcomed to come and sit in the shade of the willow and hear great stories at the base of the hill where its overseer sat, for *Raphaelas* knew all the tales by heart; and if no one came to listen, he would pleasantly recount them to himself, for he loved to tell them.

The third tier was a great cathedral of ice and crystal, from which chilling air was taken in and dispelled through its many arched windows. Here, the sun shined but not often, for its master and his servants preferred the cool shade of darkness. This frozen palace was filled with innumerable halls and chambers where guests frequented, but did not prefer to stay long; but within the throne room, great shelves were filled from end to end with heavy tomes containing the names of all who visited, even for but an hour. This cathedral was called *Ithilenthel*, and upon its icy throne was seated *Azrala*, or *Azraelas*, or *Azrael*, whose name meant “Holy Scythe.” Though *Azraelas*’ duty was not put into full effect for a great long time, (As was true with many of his brothers) he was to be the overseer of the dead; those that had passed from one of the worlds of life into the eternity of Eldar. *Ithilenthel* was a place of rest for some and internment for others, but it was altogether a temporary place as guests were recorded and sent upward to higher levels of the tower.

The second tier was a grand chamber of discussion with many rows of seats before a great throne. And within the chamber rested a tremendous set of scales with a White Feather resting on one arm beneath an ornament of the sun, and a Black Feather resting upon the other beneath an ornament of the moon. This hall was called *Ebenthel* and was a place of justice. The hall was overseen by *Casihala*, or *Cassielus*, or *Cassiel*, who was the “Holy Scale.” It was within this hall that the visitors of Eldar were assessed and *Cassielus* made judgment on the matter of where they should be led. The White Feather provided reason to be sent more swiftly to *Alinthel* for respite, while the Black Feather provided reason to remain within *Ithilinthel* for a longer period of time. When the White outweighed the Black again, the rest sentence was at an end. (For some, the White never again outweighed the Black).

The first tier was a majestic castle with high walls and battlements surrounding the base of the divine tower. With banners waving from proudly standing steeples and trumpets blaring from within its noble halls, it was a welcome sight to those who were weary and wandering. Its gates were strong and grand in design, and it was a sight of utter awe. This heavenly fortress was dubbed *Balenthel* and was a great herald of Eldar (Though not a protector until much later). The ruler of its throne was *Michala*, or *Michaelas*, or *Michael*, and was called the “Holy Sword.” For in one hand he held a sword of brilliant make, and in the other a shield emblazoned with the seal of Eldar; and it was forever a boon to those who sought defense, or merely a strong shoulder to lean upon in hard times.

Within the walls of this castle stood the Tower of Eleven Tiers, and beyond the walls of this castle, lay a vast city whose boundaries could scarcely be seen, though the standards that mounted the outer walls could be descried, waving in the wind. This was the great City of Elysium where the world looked upward to the Throne of the Sky. But as of yet it was a city of silence and stillness, for the Haihalarim were alone within their grand kingdoms and the world below was as empty as the wind beyond its walls.

And so, as the Lord called for the birth of his children, the Haihalarim, so did he lay out the Word across the whole of Eldar. The Word spoke the glory of creation and, at its sound, creation came to be. The Heavens were filled with a multitude of joyous voices, singing His praise, and soon the great city was ringing with cries of glee and jubilation. The sound of a thousand million pairs of ivory wings rose up from the citadel as the newborn host rose up to meet its creator. They were the Halarim, blessed spirits who boasted wings of white and gold feathers, and were subordinate to their predecessors, the Haihalarim.

One by one they ascended the great tower and knelt before the throne of God, offering their praise and thanks to Him; and He said unto them, “Rise, Child. You are Aldebaraan. Go forth and do good works, for I name thee angel, servant of light. Rise, Child. You are Bael. Go forth and do good works, for I name thee angel, servant of light. Rise, Child. You are Belamy. Go forth and do good works, for I name thee angel, servant of light. Thus were all the Halarim called before Him, and thus were all the Halarim sent out by Him to dwell in the golden city below. And thus was the world of Eldar populated.

Chapter II: The Ordering of the Halarim

It is written, in the scrolls of Palenthel which were handed down from the Eldari, that the ordering of the first of the Halarim were as follows:

It is known that the first ten were called Haihalarim, and these were granted lordship over the tiers of the Heavenly Tower. The first born of these was Lucifer, whose hair was as blazing golden fire. He was the mightiest and most high of his kind, and the silver crown of Valhalas was upon his brow. Next was Uriel, the wisest and most knowledgeable of the Haihalarim. All law was in his keeping and was passed by way of his lips. Gabriel was the keeper of records and the issuer of names. All that was passed down from the Lord was announced by the blaring of his trumpet and the waving of his banner. Into Sachiël's care was given the record of those who had come and gone, and those who were yet to come. Samael was the bringer of comfort and healing. In his dark hair was the peace and silence of night, and in his hand was the gentle rod of soft gold.

Anael was the patron of art, music and all things beautiful. His hair was golden brown like the coat of the faun, and his voice was like sweet music rivaling that of his gleaming lyre. Raphael was the lover of the Word and the herald of love. Upon his staff, the Word was inscribed and it was burned into the hearts of those who had been claimed by despair. Azrael was the bearer of silence and the cold of sleep. Those who were not ready to come before the Lord were his charge, and to them he granted the purifying sleep; and when they awoke, they would be cleansed. Cassiel was the great judge and the levier of souls. It was by his hand that the doors of the tower were opened or shut, and it was by his word that one was destined for warm rest or for icy sleep. The last of the Haihalarim was called Michael and he was the bringer of wrath and destruction to all enemies of the Word. In the beginning no such enemies existed, but the gleam of his sword and shield and the radiance of his golden head inspired dignity and reverence for the Lord.

It is believed that the Halarim came forth in groups of seven and the first of these is recorded to have been Aldebaraan, a noble angel who was a lover of life. Following him was Bael, whose beauty made him a favorite amongst his brothers and sisters and lent himself to the service of his older brother, Lucifer. Antares was a stout and prudent angel who felt at one with the earth and brother to the stones. Luniel was a maiden more radiant than anything in all the heavens, and yet she was darker than the cold shadows of Ithilinthel. She came forth with her twin sister Pyrinia, who was a being of sheer golden brilliance. Then came the lord of the crystal mountain, Falrios who glittered with silver and sapphire. His warm brother, Regulus was swift and light as summer rain.

After Luniel and Pyrinia came the brothers Phul and Shamshiel who also were twins but shone as differently as night and day; for Phul was dark like the deepest indigo, and Shamshiel a bright and merry sunbeam. Panaliel was a maiden after the heart of Antares for she, too, loved all things strong and ancient, and she was wise beyond her years. Virinia was a thing of grace and beauty with hair that flowed like the Seven Great Rivers and eyes that soothed the most grievous of heartaches. Corriel was an angel delicate as blown glass and she loved to dance with wondrous ribbons of silver in her hair. Following Corriel was Belial who was wonderfully clever and imaginative, but was always vexed with the plague of indecision. This is why he loved all the works of nature and could not favor one over another. The last of this group is recorded to have been an angel called Siviël. She came last of her family because she was timid and reserved by

nature. She was lovely as the meadows of Alinthel and spent much time there, laying in the grass and listening as Raphael recounted tales to her. She was least of her kin, likely by her own election; and yet, for the sake of our history, she will soon be among the most important of the Halarim. For though she loved her brother's stories of the worlds that would come to be, she longed to be part of them.

Among those who followed after were the twins, Amy and Belamy. Amy was a stunning maiden and her brother Belamy a courageous warrior who would come to lead a great portion of Eldar's army. Asmodios was an angel of vast knowledge and much of this knowledge he shared with Vassaho and Ahares. Tohrabel was a founder of the hours and helped to bring the power of time into being in certain parts of Eldar. Palimon was a lord endowed with great wit and a blessedly articulate tongue. Andromalios was an upholder of justice and an assistant to Cassiel the Judge. Ronove became a student of Gabriel and mastered the names and tongues of Eldar. His brother, Stolas was also a lover of learning and quickly became a master of the great laws and memorized the holy texts. Sahan was a lord of brilliant intellect and devised plans for many of the most handsome palaces in Eldar. Lis Tetras loved only to spread his wings against the winds of Eldar and circle the Great Tower to its peak and sail down again.

Amon was a Halaron of great ability and wisdom, for he knew of all the powers of the Halarim and studied the capabilities of his older siblings the Haihalarim. Fornios was a torrent of energy and sprinted gracefully across the breadth of Eldar. Baelsabil, was indeed a mighty angel and looked up to his brother, Michael for guidance and tutelage. Molos was staunch and strong, but he always sought action and adventure, and ran across the wide fields. He was fascinated by the curious beasts that were to populate the worlds, and were spoken of in the books of Palenthel, and it was his passion to know them all. Adramelas was a reclusive Halaron who preferred silence to speaking, and spent much of his time listening to his brothers and sisters; and pleasantly, but often blindly, agreeing with anything they said. Lison was a great gatherer who formed engaging conversations with his siblings and constantly had a group surrounding him. Dovael and Halandil were brother and sister who were leaders in their circles. They always spoke words of encouragement to their fellows and helped them achieve good things. Everel was a marvel with her speech and Calithal a wonder with his mind. Keldorien and Ambiel were quick with their hands and Ellender was swift on her feet. And thus did Eldar become a place of greatness.

Chapter III: The Appointing of the First Patron

It is not known how many years or thousands of years Eldar existed before the ordering of the first "Other World," or even what that world was. However, it is known

that one day, Gabriel sailed down from the Tier of Palentel, sounding his trumpet and unfurling his scroll. "Listen ye Halarim, ye citizens of Eldar! There is cause for great jubilation, for the Lord and Father has made decree that he is to give life to another world. He seeks one among you who would be patron to that world and oversee its creation." The Halarim were all taken with rapture at the speculation of who it was to be. They all hoped to be given such a chance and listened tentatively to their brother's words. "The selection shall be made in secret, so that no one will know who is being considered until the final choice has been made. The deliberation period will last for seven days, and on the morning of the eighth day, one of you will awaken to find a golden acorn nestled beneath your bed cushion." With that, he returned to the Great Tower to begin consulting with his brother Archangels about who would be elected.

The next morning, every Haloron displayed his or her very best. Each sought to prove themselves capable leaders, builders, thinkers, artists, and warriors, in hopes that they would be chosen. Whispers spread through the citadel that the most likely candidate was known or that something was overheard in the dead of night, but the council that the Haihalarim held was completely secret; and the rumors held no truth. Still, they flew and still the Halarim hoped and waited and asked and told and gave and took and thought. But Siviell, who was called Elmarien by her Father, took to lying beside the brook and watching the passing of the clouds. She disliked the gossip that her brothers and sisters spread and thought they should let it be.

Aldebaraan, who admired her very much, would come some days to the river to sit with her. "Someone is going to be chosen," Siviell would say. "And what we say or do shall make little difference in who is elected, or likely not at all. I do so hope it is me, but I shall be content to lie in wait."

"Do you doubt that it should be you?" he would ask. To this she would say nothing, but smile at him. In truth, she held little hope that she would be chosen, but said nothing of it one way or another.

"I believe I shall be chosen," said Stolas. "I am by far the wisest of my kin, for no one else has spent so long studying the texts as I have."

"It should be me," said Baelsabil. "For I am by large the mightiest and most skillful warrior. No enemy of this new world or any would dare challenge me!"

"Quell your boastful tongues," said Amy. "For I am the obvious candidate. Who better to give rise to a world of grace and beauty than one as beautiful as I?"

"I think I will be chosen," said Adramelos. "For I have heard the Haihalarim talk as they pass, and I believe that I am the one they seek."

"The spirit of deceit has worked upon you, Brother," said Bael. "For I am the most popular choice. They will pick me for certain."

"Yes," concurred Adramelos, swiftly. "Bael should be chosen!" And so, Bael grew a following of supporters who thought that he should be elected patron of the new world. This wave of support became very strong and Bael was surprised to find how truly well favored he was by his siblings, and feared it would be a great disappointment to them if he was not chosen. Undoubtedly, it would be an even greater disappointment to himself.

So under the cover of night, he ascended the Great Tower and came secretly to Arenthel to speak to his brother Lucifer, with whom he held close council. "Brother, my Brother. Keeper of the Fire that burns within the Word. Tell me which of us is being considered for patronage."

Lucifer thought on this request for a moment, for he loved his younger brother and favored him above even his own kind. But he was the prince of the Haihalarim and strove to uphold the duty of his position. "I cannot, Brother Bael, for the secrecy of the council must not be broken."

And Bael replied, "Brother, my Brother. Bearer of the crown that commands the Heavens. Tell me that you will speak well of me to your fellows, that I shall be chosen for patronage."

Lucifer thought on this request for a moment, for he cared for his younger brother and favored him greatly, as Bael loved him in return. But he was the first born of the Haihalarim and strove to keep good the promise he made to God. "I cannot, Brother Bael, for the honor of the council must not be spoilt." And so, Bael nodded and descended into the city. That night the Haihalarim met at the Ivory Table before the seat of the Lord and resumed their conference. Many names were mentioned and talked over and Lucifer listened nervously. He did not want to leave his brother without some sort of support, and surely the other Haihalarim must each favor at least one candidate, or else no one would be elected. Finally, he spoke up and mentioned Bael's name. "He has great support amongst the Halarim and I believe he has a leader's spirit," Lucifer said.

But after thinking this over for a moment, Michael replied, "He has spirit, yes, but I fear he is *too* ambitious."

"True," added Samael. "He seeks too oft the admiration of his comrades, and too little the admiration of himself."

"Too little the admiration of the Lord," added Uriel. Soon the council had passed over Bael completely and Lucifer said nothing further.

Finally, came the morning of the eighth day and as the light of Mellenthel shone down upon the beds of the Halarim, each one awoke to hope and joy. Each reached beneath their cushion, but only one drew forth a golden acorn. Stolas found nothing, Baelsabil found nothing, Amy found nothing, Adramelos found nothing, Bael found nothing. Nor did Aldebaraan, Regulus, Belial, Palimon, or Luniel. When Siviell reached beneath her cushion, her hand grasped the little prize. She said nothing for a great long time, afraid even to mention her fortune. But the Halarim quickly went throughout their sblings and inquired about their fare. It was not long before everyone came empty handed to Siviell's bed and bid her show them her prize.

As she looked out at them, bowing before her, she felt embarrassed. But when the Ten Old Ones descended the tower and stood before her, she could hide it no longer. Holding up the acorn to her mentors, they bowed as well and named her Patron of the New World. She was taken up the Great Tower and was brought before the throne of the Lord. She fell to her knees and bowed low. "Rise, my child," said the Lord. "You have been chosen of many to be mother of a great new world. Do you accept this calling, Siviell of the green meadow?"

She bowed low again and replied, "Yes, my Father. Gladly do I answer this calling, and eagerly do I seek to make green the meadows of the new world."

And so she was escorted down the many tiers of the great tower by the council of Haihalarim and brought through the streets of the white city as her siblings watched in awe. The 11 left the gates of Elysium far behind and strode across the endless plains of Eldar, where Siviël had never before stepped foot. So breathtaking was the sight that she paused, as if afraid to be lost forever in the emptiness of the green fields. She turned to her wise brothers and asked them, "Does Eldar truly continue like this forever?"

"If you wish it to," answered Uriel. "But the end can be reached in but a moment." Just as he said it, Siviël started in shock as her company came to a halt at the edge of a sudden precipice. Peering over this edge, she saw nothing but blackness as far her eyes could grasp.

"Where did this abyss come from?" she asked.

"It was always here, for our Father always knew that there was much more to come. Though Eldar shall be the end for many creatures, for us it is only the beginning." With that, Uriel withdrew from the edge of the abyss and Siviël noticed, for the first time, the presence of two wide leather straps bolted into the ground; their other ends were someplace within the great tower.

"Let it begin," cried Lucifer with a wave of his hand and Michael took his gleaming sword in hand and severed the leather leashes with the fury of a thunderbolt. Suddenly there was a sound more awesome and terrible than Siviël had ever heard and from the top of the tower came two blinding streaks of light. A tremendous bird swooped down from the heavens, glowing with every color representing of dominance and command, with feathers like gold; and it dove into the abyss like a hurricane. With it came a three-eyed beast, burning with all the power and rage of the universe, red with a monstrous force; plummeting into the deep well of darkness.

As Siviël watched, light and dark collided and destroyed each other, then were reborn from each other's breasts, and thus did all things come into being. She watched as countless lights, though infinitesimal in size, filled the endless void with a luminosity that was impervious to the creeping darkness, for they were not swallowed up. The Beast belched flame hotter than madness and the bird breathed a wind cooler than wisdom, itself, until the black nothingness had perished and in its place was an eternity of life and movement and energy. When the work was finished, the two great beasts returned to their place at the Lord's throne and Samael restored the leashes to wholeness again. Now Siviël understood precisely what Uriel meant. Now she realized that she was standing not at the end of the world, but the beginning of the universe. She turned to them and said, "I wish to see it all."

"And so you shall," said Uriel placing his hand on her arm. "We have only just written the first chapter of this story."

Chapter IV: The Creation of Elmar

When Siviell Elmarien returned to the city of Elysium, the Halarim were eagerly awaiting news of what was to come. “There is much work to be done. Those who would aid me, come forward and be welcome.” The Halarim all looked at one another, wrestling with the idea. Some were cross that they had not been chosen and declined Siviell’s invitation. These bitterly returned to their homes. Many did not understand what to do, so stood there indecisively until others came forward and their choice was made for them. A few stepped forward immediately, eager to help.

First among them was Aldebaraan, to whom Siviell believed she owed her good fortune, for he had confidence in her when even she hadn’t confidence in herself. She was glad to have him. Falrios of the chilling wind came to her side, as did Regulus of the crystal lakes. Virina, sister to the gentle streams came also, with Antares of the ancient mountains. Corriel of the windy peak came, and Panaliel of the earthy heart. Along with them came the twins Luniel and Pyrinia, and Phul and Shamshiel, to offer their illumination in the darkness and their shadow in the light. Together, they made twelve; a number which seemed good to the Haihalarim. Therefore, it was commanded that the construction of the new world begin immediately.

Uriel took the twelve to the edge of Eldar and showed them where their world was to set among the stars. “But how,” asked Panaliel. “shall we go about creating a world? We do not know even the first thing about it!”

“Do not fear,” replied Uriel. “Father Halatu has created it, already, in His mind, but He wishes for your talents to bring it into existence. You shall be His hands, and He shall work through your minds.” With that, he sent them forth into the great expanse of space and bid them begin. They feared to be left on their own but Siviell, who had witnessed the creation of the universe, knew what needed to be accomplished.

“Antares,” she said. “You shall begin, for our world must be strong and healthy!” Antares nodded and, placing his hands together, thought for a moment. Suddenly, he found a large quantity of clay amassed in his arms, as if it had been placed there by Halatu Himself. Then he thought of what should be done with the clay, and an idea appeared in his mind as if it, too, had been placed there. He formed the clay into a sphere and sat it in the midst of the cosmos, firm and solid. Now that the first step had been taken, they better understood how to build it. Filled with joy at his work, Antares dug his fingers into the surface of the clay and drew up great mountains, and furrowed wide ravines and valleys until the face of the world was, in itself, a work of art.

Antares knew when his work was finished for the time being so he stepped back and allowed Siviell to look over it. She was very pleased with what had been done, but she felt their work was only just beginning. She called upon Virinia to give the dry brown world some color. Virinia cupped her hands together and let rain fall into the vast chasms

of the earth, until most of the surface had become covered with blue oceans, with a single great mass of land rising up from the waves. "Wait," Antares shouted. "Not so much! I worked hard to create that!"

"Calm yourself," Siviël said. "This is not your work of art, nor Virinia's, nor mine. This duty belongs to us all, and we all shall have an equal share in its creation.

"Then may I try my hand at this," Regulus asked, stepping beside Virinia. With one finger, he drew lines across the barren plains and allowed them to fill with water until he had made rivers, streams and lakes all across the world. Virinia was obliged to him for defending her wish for water. He had covered the north, east and west of this continent with rivers, and was dragging his finger toward the south, when his hand was halted by Panaliel.

"Here," she said. "there should be nothing but desert. There is a need also for sand and dryness." Antares smiled at her, recognizing her love of the mighty earth.

"All must not be warm," said Formalios. "Mustn't there also be cold?" With that, he pressed his finger upon the roof of the world. "The north shall be the domain of ice and snow." A grand sheet of ice began to cover the top of this globe until it was capped with a crown of pure white spires.

"But the cold should not dwell in just a single kingdom of its own," said Corriel. She blew a frozen wind upon the surface of the earth and a swirling storm dashed all around it, spreading a gently cooling breeze throughout the world.

"You have all done well," Siviël said happily. "But our world must truly live."

Aldebaran came forward and said, "I shall do my best to help with that." He placed his hands upon the dry earth and emerald grass sprung up from his touch, covering the world with trees, flowers and leaves of all sizes. Siviël then placed her hand upon his and bestowed color to the flowers in a full spectrum of shades and hues. Now the world was a place of many colors, scents and sensations.

"But how can our beauty be seen when our world is so dark?" asked Pyrinia.

"Darkness is good," replied Phul.

"But not so much darkness," added Shamshiel. "Or one cannot appreciate the goodness of it."

"That is true," concurred Luniel. The four came together and began to deliberate. Once they had come to an agreement, Pyrinia and Phul stood side by side. Pyrinia waved her arm over the world and it was altogether filled with golden light. Phul then waved his hand over the world and it became full of indigo shade. The two struggled to create a balance, but none would come of it. So Luniel and Shamshiel came forward to help. Luniel made a ball of white light and placed it into the shroud of Phul's night, so that always there existed a lantern in the darkness. At this same moment, Shamshiel formed a ball of dark fire and nestled it within Pyrinia's mantle of daylight, catching fire and gathering the light toward itself, so that always shadows could exist even in the glow of noontime. Now a sturdy but invisible chain had been driven through the center of the earth so as to anchor the ball of light and the ball of fire to each other, and an irrevocable compromise between the night and day was formed.

When the balances between wet and dry, light and dark, warm and cold, great and small, had been achieved the twelve stepped back to admire the product of their labor and they were pleased with it. So, too, was Halatu they felt.